



# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 15 No.1

Spring 2010

Greensburg, Indiana

### Epigraph-

*"History relies on  
fact; readable his-  
tory relies on fact  
and conjecture."*

*-Anonymous*

### Editor's Comment

Add North Decatur High School's Chautauqua to your "must see" list this spring. If you have attended before, you know the high quality of the presentations; if this will be your first time, you will be extremely pleased with the activities and personalities you encounter. There won't be any referees or scoreboards involved, but there will be much to take pride in. John Pratt is an outstanding Ringmaster, and his students put on a great show.

### Chautauqua: The Highs and Lows of a High School Event

When George Granholt asks you to write an article, you write an article – especially considering the fact that he taught me how to play tennis and helped me land a tennis collegiate scholarship. The subject – my favorite program, mirrored after one of the best movements in history that has been all but forgotten- Chautauqua.

I remember as I was researching the history of Decatur County for my senior research paper in college, I ran across an excerpt on the traveling chautauquas that passed through the area. First of all, I wondered why I had never heard of this. To think that Helen Keller, William Jennings Bryan, and John Phillips Sousa all were guests of local chautauquas simply amazed me. This was something that I needed to know more about. Great lectures, musicians, hypnotists, magicians, and ministers, just to name a few, all live under one roof (or tent as the case might be). What a tremendous showcase of diverse talents that combined local and nationally renowned acts. The traveling chautauquas brought the best of culture to small towns all across the country. Teddy Roosevelt referred to them as the most American thing in America. Unfortunately, the grandeur of Chautauqua faded away with the advent of radio and the Great Depression. Today, one must travel to Chautauqua, New York, to experience a Chautauqua. There are a few others across the country, and numerous arts and crafts fairs have adopted the name.

In the fall of 2007, I began teaching my first term as a high school social studies teacher at North Decatur. It is an incredible feeling to look forward to going to work every day, to know that at the age of 43 I have found my dream job. As much as I love the daily lessons and getting to know the students, I quickly realized that I needed to create projects that develop their cognitive skills and inspire within them a desire to learn. That was when I arrived at

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my first project idea, Chautauqua.

The idea for the students was simple. Take a talent, skill, or interest that they have, and combine that with the subject matter of the class to create one worthwhile project. Original music, documentaries, artwork, poetry, and personal testimonies are but a few of the examples I have seen. All students in my classes must complete a project, and with my teaching five different subjects (Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Indiana Studies, and World History), the diversity of topics covered is immense. Classroom winners are voted on by myself, and the students (each weighing 50% of the vote/just like Dancing With the Stars). The finals take place as a part of the grand Chautauqua extravaganza, where an independent judge determines the winners in a highly competitive, standing room only, finale.

After the success of the first student event, I realized it was time to think bigger: a full day and evening event filled with guest speakers and performers, as much as I possibly could make it resemble an event fitting the golden era of Chautauqua. In the spring of 2008, the first all day event occurred. Daytime guests included North Decatur alums Ruth Anne Gordon (Channel 8) and Judge Mark Bailey. Ray Boomhower gave a stirring rendition of Bobby Kennedy's 1968 Indiana Presidential campaign--Decatur County's last visit from a major presidential candidate. The evening featured the operatic talents of Alyson Bates and Cory Bickel.

As anyone who has ever hosted an event knows, the challenges have been many. Securing a full slate of lecturers and performers with no budget is challenge #1, especially as this is a semi-annual event. I have dozens upon dozens of rejection letters that I have accumulated. I know collecting rejection letters may seem a bit morbid, but I try and take each NO and turn it into a long term YES. For the current spring 2010 event, I already have two rejection letters to add to the collection. Condoleezza Rice is busy teaching at Stanford. Florence Henderson was willing to try and coincide a Chautauqua visit with her annual Indianapolis 500 stop, but this year's event (May 30<sup>th</sup>) does not occur until school has been out for a week.

Challenge #2, introducing arts and culture to rural Indiana: that is a challenge that the Arts and Culture Council of Decatur County knows all too well. That is why I am thrilled to have received a grant from them to help offset travel expenses. Our daytime lectures resonate extremely well with the students. They are able to personally interact with authors, and other experts from all fields of life. Having those same students pay \$5 in the evening for opera, jazz, or Rosemarie Von Trapp is another challenge. Tickets are one price for the entire day, \$10 for adults and \$5 for seniors/students. I once heard that the prospective \$5 ticket was just too pricey; still, I knew this would be a challenge before the event ever started, and I feel in-roads have been made.

The challenges of Chautauqua may be many, but the opportunities are endless. Through four events there have been nearly 30 outside lecturers/performers. The past two fall events have also included a student-driven Indiana Museum. Over 1,000 elementary students have participated, and it is growing by leaps and bounds (thanks largely to Jane Brown and the good folks at the Decatur County Historical Society). New possible adjunct events in the future include an Underground Railroad tour of homes, and a poetry festival. Chautauqua is an amazing way to educate our youth to the greatness of our local history. I describe Chautauqua to my students as "a celebration of diversity and the greatness within all of us." Thanks to the likes of Helen Keller and William Jennings Bryan, Chautauqua is alive and well in the halls of North Decatur -- the students even pronounce it correctly now.

John Pratt,  
North Decatur High School



## President's Letter

I became a Historical Society Board member eight years ago. Looking back, I am amazed how much has changed for our Society. I remember in 2002 the Museum was showing its age. Vines were growing up the inside wall of the North Parlor. The upstairs bedrooms were mostly storage, and in the backyard we had an old garage which needed repair. Then came a bequest with a mandate to rebuild the museum into a "Museum For The Ages." I had the privilege of working with David Miers on the Building Committee. Now Decatur County has a world-class facility that is the envy of counties around us. We are all rightfully proud of our Society and Museum, and I am proud to say I had a small part in this rejuvenation.

I am going off the Board at the end of January, and I will return to what I was doing when I came onto the Board in 2002: finding old motion-picture footage of Greensburg and Decatur County. Presently, I have seven hours of color footage of Greensburg from 1937 to 1952 shot by Charles Platt, owner of Morris Five & Dime Store on the west side of the square. This film needs to be edited, and I will soon be receiving a large quantity of films taken of trains in and around Decatur County in the 1950's. These are films you are going to want to see. They will be available for viewing as soon as I finish them. This takes time, but the wait is always worth it. I look forward to sharing these films with you later this year.

Let me take this opportunity to thank everyone with whom I have worked these past eight years for all their work and continued support of our Society. Thank you to the Board for their hard work. To Diana Springmier, Charity Mitchell, and Susan Ricke for their tireless commitment to the daily requirements of running a museum. Also a special thanks to the many volunteers who work behind the scenes making it all happen. And thanks to you, the membership, for your enthusiastic support of our Society year after year.

Tom Barker, President

Historical Society of Decatur county

### Membership Form

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues.

Check your address label to see if you have paid for this year. Memberships make great gifts. We are looking for new members.

## . Historical Society of Decatur County

### Museum Report – 2009

The Museum experienced an exceptional year in terms of both historical presentations and attendance. The varied featured displays and activities included the following groups and attendance numbers:

April – "Breakfast at Tiffanies" brunch – (37)  
May – South Decatur Elementary Students—(19)  
New Palestine Ladies—(12)  
June—Sesquicentennial Events—(551)  
Carousel Play and Learn Center—(14)  
July—4<sup>th</sup> of July Open House—(112)  
Wedding Reception Exhibit—(48)  
August—Ricke Shower—(21)  
September—Women Educators, D.C.—(22)  
October—Tri-Kappa Auxiliary—(22)  
Pressley Tours—two different days—(47) and (22)  
December—Ladies Tour Group—(15)  
South Decatur 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students—(94)  
"Barbie" Tea—2 seatings—(80)  
Annual Christmas Open House—(250)  
Greensburg 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

**Totals: 1,486**

**Additional Guests: 581**

**Total: 2,067**

### Barbie at '50"

A simple thank-you just doesn't seem enough to say to everyone who helped with our "Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Barbie Celebration," which was the feature exhibit at the Museum during the month of December. We consider the exhibit was a huge success with many complimentary comments made by the nearly 800 people who toured the Museum.

Without the help of the many people who loaned their Barbies and accessories, and all their help in getting the exhibit ready for viewing, we couldn't have pulled it together.

There was a large Barbie exhibit at the Indianapolis Children's Museum, and probably the best compliment we had was made by several people who said, "I don't see how the Children's Museum exhibit could be any better than this one. This is fantastic, and it's free!"

To know that so many people enjoyed and appreciated the "Barbies" made all the hard work worthwhile.

Helen Hamilton

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### *The Indiana Home*

Logan Esarey

The Museum is in possession of a small book written by former Indiana University history professor, Dr. Logan Esarey, who died in 1942. *The Indiana Home*, actually a collection of essays intended to be read to his grandchildren, presents a simple, yet accurate, description of pioneer life during Indiana's territorial and early statehood years. The book does not observe political correctness (note description of Native Americans in the first chapter), and its sketches would probably not find their way into an Indiana history textbook today, but the present edition, published in 1976 and enhanced with several drawings of essential pioneer farm implements, kitchen utensils, home appliances, and carpentry tools, makes an excellent reference source for adults as well as children. At the end of the book, Professor Esarey offers a few interesting vignettes dealing with pioneer society. (Perhaps a "reality" series?)

### **Doctor William Harrison Kemper, U.S. Volunteers**

The Museum has a brief biography of Doctor Kemper in its Civil War archives. His parents, Arthur S. Kemper and Patience (Bryant) Kemper were from Kentucky, and they were of German descent. In 1859, Doctor Kemper became a resident of Greensburg and entered the Greensburg Seminary in the building which still stands at the southwest corner of Franklin and McKee Streets where, the biography states, "...his studies were industriously pursued." He then studied medicine with John W. Moody, M.D., a prominent Greensburg physician who was one of the founders of the Indiana State Medical Society.

Doctor Kemper became the 47<sup>th</sup> Decatur County resident to enlist in the Union army, joining what would become Company B, Seventh Regiment Indiana Volunteers. His military unit was engaged in numerous Civil War battles, especially in the Tennessee campaigns. In April of 1863, Dr. Kemper became a member of Wilder's Brigade of Mounted Infantry.

After his war experiences, Dr. Kemper continued his medical studies, graduating from the Long Island College Hospital, Brooklyn, New York. He then took up residency in Muncie, Indiana. Dr. William Harrison Kemper...another significant Decatur County veteran of the Civil War.

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### **From a 1966 Historical Society Bulletin**

#### *Some Reminiscences on the Settlement of Decatur County, Indiana*

William W. Parker

Also archived in the Museum is an excellent article by Mr. Parker pertaining to Decatur County's early years which would make good companion reading with Professor Esarey's work. Mr. Parker's essay deals with these topics: The First Settlers, Surveying and Laying Out the New County, Entering the New Land, Organization of the New County, The Settlement of the Land, Clearing the Land—Work of the Men, and Work of the Women. Again, it is evident political correctness was not a concern of pioneer society. Both of these documents have a common theme of "land and family"—the foundation of humanity.



## Edmund Gunter and His Surveying Chain

The science of measurement is a characteristic of every recognized civilization the world has known, and land surveying has always been one of the most important measurements. What, basically, constitutes civilization...well, how about people and place? We need to recognize not only who we are, but also where we are.

The Museum has available a book entitled, *Measuring America*, by Andro Linklater. Chapter one of this book devotes several pages to a discussion of a Welshman named Edmund Gunter and his invention of what became known as "Gunter's Chain." Perhaps you have seen old abstracts of land ownership using the term, "...so many chains and links ...." Well, now you have the opportunity to not only read about this device, but actually see one. Mr. Dallas Whipple has brought to the Museum one of Gunter's Chains, used by Dallas' grandfather in surveying Decatur County property. Thanks, Dallas, for bringing this fascinating artifact to the Museum.



### Greensburg Second Graders

Two hundred second-grade students from Greensburg Elementary School visited the Museum on February 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. The tour focused on life during Indiana's pioneer years and the early settlement of Greensburg in the late 1820's. Using the Museum's many items of this period of the Hoosier State's history, presenters Marilyn Beaver, Charity Mitchell, Lois Carol McCormack, Dallas Whipple, and Russell Wilhoit gave the students an informative explanation of early Hoosier life.

Initially, the house itself was discussed in respect to the various rooms and the items contained in them. Next, specific artifacts were examined, including hand-made tomahawks, a river-cane fishing pole and blow-gun, a large animal trap, a sizable gourd used for storage, and a gourd drinking cup. Of special interest was a set of surveying "chains and links."

Just to prove that students themselves can be teachers, one young boy gave this explanation when he was asked the purpose of the trundle bed: "Well, if the ropes break, the trundle bed will catch you." Now, you, too, know the real reason for a trundle bed.

All in all, the students were interested and very cooperative, and the Museum was put to very good use.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Musicals

The Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Decatur County extends its thanks to reed Schuster for his long-time dedication to those citizens of Decatur County who appreciate the importance of both history and good music. These two attributes of society, attested to by the Muses of ancient Greek society and much of classical music and literature, are interwoven in the tapestry of civilization. reed, we appreciate your effort and success in reminding us of this reality through the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Musicals. Thanks also to those who shared their musical talents with us.

## Local Historical Tours

The Historical Society of Decatur County and the Adult Center are sponsoring local and architectural tours of nearby towns emphasizing the local museums. Marilyn Beaver will be organizing these tours.

The first tour will be on March 12th and will be a trip to Shelbyville to see the Courthouse, the remodeled Strand Theater, lunch, and then a trip to the Grover Museum. The Grover Museum includes street scenes from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a school room, a train exhibit, a special exhibit of Indian artifacts and a visit to the "olde soda shop" in the Museum where you can purchase a root beer float. The tour will leave the Adult Center at 10:00 and will return before 4:00. The costs will be: gasoline for the bus (ca. \$4-\$6.00 a person), and your lunch. The tour will stop at Applebees for lunch. People are not required to eat there and may see where they would like to eat around the Circle or downtown part of Shelbyville. The following restaurants are available: Linne's Bakery, Grandma's Wafflehouse, Three Sisters Bookstore, Bonnie & Clyde.

If you would like to come on the tour, please notify Marilyn Beaver (663-8680) before the 8<sup>th</sup> of March.

Articles still to come

Civil War advertisement

Coming Events

Tea cup exhibit

Request for Military Items for upcoming exhibit

St. Paul article ???

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY MUSEUM

### Exhibits 2010

#### January-April, 2010

##### ***Gallery: The Civil War and Decatur County***

The exhibit contains documents and photographs of the Underground Railroad in Decatur County, photographs of Decatur County buildings constructed before and during the War; artifacts from the war such as guns, a sword, bullets from Gettysburg; photographs, diaries, letters of Decatur County veterans of the Civil War.

##### ***Textile Display Room: Current Textile Donations to the Museum***

These consist of an 1825 woven coverlet, clothing from the 1940's to the 1960's, doll clothing in a small trunk from the 1930's, women's hats from the 1940's through the 1960's, embroidery and needle work, wedding dresses, etc.

#### April-May

If Teacups Could Talk (an exhibit of tea cups and tea pots). There will also be an open house day in early May where tea and pastries will be served. **More information will be forthcoming.**

#### May-July

Military Exhibit (There will be military uniforms exhibited on mannequins in the House, documents, photographs, memorabilia in the Gallery and Textile Exhibition Room). **If you have any memorabilia of any war from the Revolutionary War to the Iraqi War and Afghanistan which you would be willing to loan us for the Exhibit, please call the Museum (663-2764) or Ginny Garvey (663-2132). We particularly need items concerning Women in the military.**

#### July-October

##### ***Housework before Electricity***

Think of all the jobs in a household which needed to be done from the 1820's to the 1950's before there were many electronic tools. See how the washing machines changed from the creek to today's easy tools. Any memories of frozen washing on the line? The Museum will be displaying tools and household equipment that were used before we had electricity and indoor plumbing.

##### ***Textile Display Room:***

Women's Clothing 1890-1920

#### November- December

**House:** Christmas Exhibit

**Gallery:** Train Exhibit



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**"The Bulletin"**

**Society's Officers**

President: Jim Rosenberry  
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William H. Robbins

**Museum Director**

Diana Springmier

**Historical Society of Decatur County Museum**

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April  
thru December  
Museum phone/fax: 663-2764  
Email: dechissoc@etczone.net  
After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

**Society est. 1957**  
**Museum est. 1984**



Historical Society of Decatur County  
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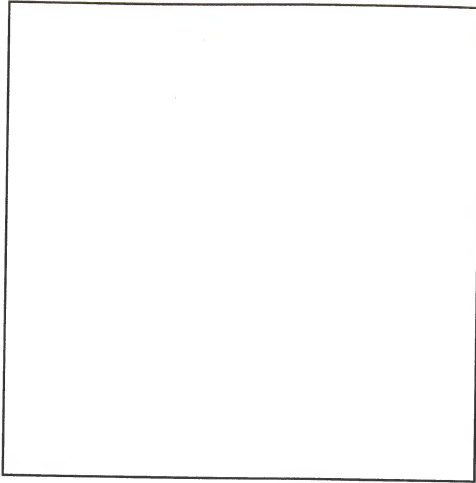
# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 15 No.2

Summer 2010

Greensburg, Indiana



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### *I Remember* **My Home Town** **Letts, Indiana** **1916-1938**

The town of Letts has a population of 250 to 300 people. Letts was a well kept and busy small town during this time. There was hardly a house or a property that was not painted clean and neat.

The New York Central Railroad ran through the town and connected Indianapolis and Louisville. It was the lifeline of the community and in my youth had two passenger trains a day; south in the morning at 9:00 A.M. and north in the afternoon at 4:00 P.M. The trains delivered freight and mail in each direction and picked up cans of milk from the creamery as they went north each afternoon. I was told that at one time there were two trains each way every week day. These were powered by steam locomotives. Diesel engines replaced the steam engines in the middle 1930s.

There were three grocery stores in town. Prior to these three stores there was an original lone grocery which was owned by Fraley and Welch. This

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store was located east of the railroad and on the north side of the main street. It was jointly owned by Mr. Fraley and Dr. John Welch and operated during the years of the 1890s and the early 1900s. This building was torn down, and the vacant lot was used to show movies on Saturday night. Later the movies were shown on the east wall of the Taggart store.

The next store (66)\* opened about 1906 and was owned by brothers E.E. McCammon and John McCammon. The McCammon store was built by U.S. Parker, John McCammon's father-in-law. Ulysses Sheridan Parker had seen a store in Tennessee that struck his fancy, and he came back to Letts and built a store like it. The building had a wide stairs in the back that led to a landing which then branched out in two directions. These steps led to a balcony that went around the entire perimeter of the store bordered with a railing of spindles. Clothing, boots, and millinery were kept upstairs. The lower part was used for groceries, canned goods, cracker barrels, a pot belied stove, etc... There was much bartering done then. Customers would bring in chickens, eggs, and butter to trade for groceries. Paul Sturgis drove a truck to Letts from the C.J. Lloyd poultry house (now Maddux Auction) in Greensburg two times a week to pick up chickens and eggs. In the middle was the ever popular candy case where nickels and pennies were spent. The McCammon store was not far from the school, and the students could go to the store at noon- time. The candy case could furnish sweets for a penny a piece. John sold his interest in the store to his brother, Bert, about 1916 and in partnership with J.R. Crawley bought the Letts grain elevator.

Another grocery store (48) was owned by Harry Taggart and was on the east side of the railroad and on the north side of the main street. The store was on the ground floor of the K of P. building with the lodge rooms above the store. The lodge had a spacious room for meeting and had a room in the back of the meeting room for pool tables. The lodge rooms were out of bounds for non-members and all the teenagers in the community. The teens managed to sneak entrance now and then which was great and exciting fun. Movies were shown on the east side of the building with the white wall serving as the screen. The Taggart store was run by Harry Taggart and his wife Zelma. The store stocked groceries on the west side of the store and dry goods on the east side. They were not much into the barter business. Their stock was shipped in by rail from Indianapolis. All of their stock came from the wholesale grocery of Knothe, Wells and Bauer. When the business began to move out of the small towns in the late 1930's and early 1940s, Harry moved to Greensburg and was a clerk for Leslie Palmer at the Leader Shoe Store until he retired. The vacant building was then occupied by Pohlman Hardware run by Bill and Earl Pohlman, which was later moved to State Road 3. In later years and presently the building is the Letts Fire Department.

There was a room in the back of this store (48a) that was used as a creamery. Farmers would bring their dairy products and sell them here. The products would then be shipped to Indianapolis or to Greensburg by rail each day. The creamery was run by Emory Skinner.

The third grocery store (49) was owned and operated by George Buening in the building directly east of the railroad and on the south side of the street across from the Taggart store. This building formerly housed the Charles Knarr restaurant. The Buening grocery sold items from the store, but its main business was in operating the three huckster trucks which covered all of the southern Decatur county and northern part of Jennings County. These trucks were operated by Stanley Witkemper, George AmRein and Joe Tebbe. The huckster trucks would carry a nearly complete line of staples and meats. They would also accept barter of eggs and chickens. The trucks would start out early in the morning and be on the road until 5:00 or 6:00 in the evening. They would unload their eggs and chickens and immediately restock the trucks for the next day. This was a six day a week operation. It was a very successful business until the 1930's when automobiles were more prevalent and people became more mobile. George Buening closed the store and bought a farm in the St. Paul area. Joe Tebbe went to Greensburg and became a Farm Bureau insurance salesman. Stan Witkemper had a store in Milhousen. George AmRhein operated a farm between Letts and Westport.

There was a very thriving hardware store (55) on the west side of the railroad and on the south side of the street. Ken Adams was one of the owners. The store handled a full line of hardware, gates, fencing, barbed wire, etc... The broad front porch was covered and was a favorite hang-out for the loafers, especially on Saturday afternoons.

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Arthur Tudor worked there, and when the store closed in the 1930s, he and his wife Eva moved to Greensburg, and he spent the rest of his work life at Corbett-Craig Hardware.

There were two garages in town for auto repair and maintenance. The original garage (32) was built by Dr. Welch for his son Russell who was married to Mabel Evans. Russell, of course, was Dr. Dickson's brother-in-law. The mechanics were Jim Parker and "Sonny" Clark, Jim opened his own repair shop in his father's blacksmith's shop (see 21 a). Jim could repair anything from a toaster, an iron, a refrigerator to an automobile. After his wife died, Jim worked in maintenance at Bohn Aluminum and had his own repair shop on East Central in Greensburg. When the Welch garage was sold, "Sonny" Clark moved to Greensburg and worked at McCoy and Douglas for many years. The garage had two gas pumps and sold Standard Oil products. The gas pumps had a glass tube at the top which had one gallon markings and held 10 gallons. By moving a handle back and forth on the side of the pump, you were able to fill the tube. Gravity then fed the gas into the automobile gas tank. For a two gallon purchase, you would lower the gas to the 8 gallon mark. It was hard to be accurate. The Welch garage was sold in the late 1920s to Ed Buening of Millhousen. It was operated by him until the 1950s when he went out of business as the town began to fade and the auto traffic was mostly on State Road 3, west of town. Bill Rethlake was the other mechanic here, and after the closing he moved to Greensburg and had his own shop on West Main Street across from the Trakside Restaurant. Ed Buening and Bill Rethlake built the first Letts fire truck on an old truck chassis.

The other garage (35) was owned and operated by Ernest Carder. Ernest was the sole mechanic here, and a group of regular customers and evidently did Ernest well as he raised a large family.

The Letts State Bank (33) was in business from the 1890s to the 1920s. Stockholders in this bank were Dr. Welch, Urso McCorkle, and Ken Adams. The bank went out of business when automobiles allowed travel to the Greensburg banks.

After George Buening bought the building where Charles Knarr had his restaurant, Charlie bought the bank building and operated a restaurant there until the 1930s. Urso McCorkle was the owner of the natural gas company which had wells east of Letts. Kenneth Adams was the owner of the hardware store. There was a barber shop (34) in a room in the back of the bank. Frank Carder (son of Ernest) barbered here for several years as did Howard Williams.

The other barber shop (9) was on the north side of the street and west of the railroad. There were many barbers over the years. The barber whose tenure was the longest was Howard "Butch" Williams who worked in Letts for 20 to 25 years. He moved to Greensburg in the late 1930s and was a barber there until his death. One of his sons, Lowell "Little Butch" Williams worked at C.H. Johnson and sons for many years. His other son, Bob Williams, became well-known as a sports writer for the Indianapolis Star. When we played basketball in the alley beside his house, he wrote up the games on one of those toy typewriters. Bob was 11 or 12 years old then. The barber shop was sold to Harry White. When the town began to fade, Harry went to Greensburg and worked in a barber shop owned by Walter "Watt" Curtis on West Main Street at the corner of Main and Monfort.

The Post Office was between McCammon's store (66) and the Barber Shop (64). The first postmaster was John Stout (Marian Stout Lawson's father). Marian was an elected office holder at the courthouse in Greensburg and was at the Union Trust Insurance for many years. The next postmaster was George "Hunk" Davis. He was the grandfather of Dale Myers who was at the First Federal in Greensburg for many years. Dale was reared by his grandparents. Pearl Beard was the last postmaster.

There was a general purpose building (67) next to McCammon's store that was owned by Charlie Knarr. The rear of the building was used for storage. The front of the building was used for Saturday night chili suppers and oyster stew suppers for raising funds for churches which at that time did not have facilities as they do now.

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The railroad depot (48) was on the east side of the tracks and north of the main street. Wilbur Wasson was the first agent, followed by Herschel Root, then Ray Patrick, and then Dorsey Trapp. There was the usual waiting room for passengers next to the telegraph office. The freight building (47) was north of the depot where all of the incoming freight was stored until it was picked up. There were four iron-wheeled cars that were the height of the freight car floor. The agent would usually have the outgoing freight and the cream cans on the cart ready when the passenger train stopped. In the meantime, the postmaster locked up the Post Office and came down to meet the train and exchange out-going mail for the incoming mail. Passengers boarded or departed at the same time. This event was always an interesting and "looked for-ward to" event by everyone, especially the young people. When the train was not scheduled to stop, the railroad had a pick-up rack along the track south of the main street where the postmaster would hang the mail sack in a vertical position, fastened on both ends and with a strap in the middle. There was a hook on the baggage car that the baggage clerk would extend and catch the mail bag. He would kick the incoming mail bag out of the car and it would come flying onto the platform of the depot. Once in a while that pick-up would not work and there was a late delivery. South of the depot was a well that was used by most of the people and businesses as their only water supply. Most of the time there was a "community tin cup" hanging on the pump. When the cup was not there, you cupped your left hand under the spout and pumped the handle with your right hand and drank from the cupped hand.



**Enoch Parker**

### **Breakfast at Seitz' Restaurant**

One of the popular eating places in Greensburg was this restaurant-a family-owned business serving local citizens for over sixty years. The restaurant is one of the enterprises described in the Historical Society's 20010-2011 calendar. The Museum has a breakfast menu from the restaurant, but a date for the menu is unknown. If you have an idea about the approximate date of the prices, please call the Museum.



## President's Letter

### Membership Form

Have you paid your dues for 2010

Membership rates are as follows:

Student \$ 10.00 per year

Individual \$ 15.00 per year

Family \$ 25.00 per year

Patron \$ 50.00 per year

Historian \$100.00 per year

Lifetime \$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues.

Check your address label to see if you have paid for this year. Memberships make great gifts. We are looking for new members.

## Local Historical Tours

The Historical Society of Decatur County and the Adult Center are sponsoring a trip to the Indiana State Museum and the Indiana Historical Society Museum in Indianapolis on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

The Indiana State Museum is hosting the exhibit: "With charity for all" an exhibit of Lincoln memorabilia. The museum also has a great collection of materials representing the history of Indiana from the early native Americans to the present. There will also be lunch at the Ayres Tea Room at the Museum.

After lunch we will go to the Indiana Historical Society Museum to view the exhibits for **You Are There**, an interactive exhibit with the use of 3-d photography and reenactment presenters presenting three periods of Indianapolis history: 1914: The Violin Maker Upstairs; 1924: Tool Guys and Tin Lizzies; 1945: Hoosier Home Front.

Cost:

\$4-6 for transportation Payable to the Adult Center

\$6.50 Entry fee for the Indiana State Museum

Lunch at the Ayres Tea Room or on your own

\$6.50 Entry fee for the Exhibit: **You Are There**

For further information on the museums and exhibits, see the following web pages:

<http://www.indianahistory.org>

<http://www.indianamuseum.org>

If you would like to come on the tour, please notify Marilyn Beaver (663-8680) before the 18<sup>th</sup> of May.



## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY MUSEUM

### Exhibits 2010

#### January-April, 2010

##### ***Gallery: The Civil War and Decatur County***

The exhibit contains documents and photographs of the Underground Railroad in Decatur County, photographs of Decatur County buildings constructed before and during the War; artifacts from the war such as guns, a sword, bullets from Gettysburg; photographs, diaries, letters of Decatur County veterans of the Civil War.

##### ***Textile Display Room: Current Textile Donations to the Museum***

These consist of an 1825 woven coverlet, clothing from the 1940's to the 1960's, doll clothing in a small trunk from the 1930's, women's hats from the 1940's through the 1960's, embroidery and needle work, wedding dresses, etc.

#### April 1st-May 31st

If Teacups Could Talk (an exhibit of tea cups and tea pots).

#### May 1st-July 31st

Military Exhibit (There will be military uniforms exhibited on mannequins in the House, documents, photographs, memorabilia in the Gallery and Textile Exhibition Room). **If you have any memorabilia of any war from the Revolutionary War to the Iraqi War and Afghanistan which you would be willing to loan us for the Exhibit, please call the Museum (663-2764) or Ginny Garvey (663-2132). We particularly need items concerning Women in the military.**

#### August 1st-November 30th

##### ***Housework before Electricity***

Think of all the jobs in a household which needed to be done from the 1820's to the 1950's before there were many electronic tools. See how the washing machines changed from the creek to today's easy tools. Any memories of frozen washing on the line? The Museum will be displaying tools and household equipment that were used before we had electricity and indoor plumbing.

##### ***Textile Display Room:***

Women's Clothing 1890-1920

#### November- December

**House:** Christmas Exhibit

**Gallery:** Train Exhibit

**Editor of the Bulletin**

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Irene Krieger  
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Batesville, IN 47006

**"The Bulletin"**

**Society's Officers**

President: Jim Rosenberry  
Vice-President: Bryan Robbins  
Treasurer: Linda Volk  
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Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Bailey

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Diana Springmier

**Historical Society of Decatur County Museum**

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April  
thru December

Museum phone/fax: 663-2764

Email: dechissoc@etczone.net

After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Memberships are payable by January 1st.  
Have you paid? Check your address label.

Museum est. 1984  
Society est. 1957



Historical Society of Decatur County  
P.O. Box 163  
Greensburg, IN 47240

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# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 15 No.3

Fall 2010

Greensburg, Indiana

**"O wild West Wind,, thou  
breath of Autumn's be-  
ing..."**

**If Winter comes, can  
Spring be far behind?"**

**Shelley: Ode to the West  
Wind**

### Editor's Note

The accompanying reminiscence, *My Home Town: Letts, Indiana, 1916-1938* was written by Neal McCammon who, along with brother, Leon, are sons of the late John McCammon. The portion of the document in the Museum's possession, and presented here, is approximately one-third of what is titled, "Chapter 1." Additional pages of "Chapter 1" will be published in ensuing issues of the *Bulletin*. As you read the excerpt, you will see the author has scripted a fond recollection of Letts, and the descriptions are singularly detailed. Accompanying the narrative is an index which refers to two "diagrams" of the community as well as several photographs. There are additional chapters in the author's possession, and the Museum hopes to publish these in the *Bulletin* as they become available. The editor believes you will enjoy reading *My Home Town: Letts, Indiana, 1916-1938*.

### *I Remember*

## My Home Town

## Letts, Indiana

## 1916-1938

The town of Letts has a population of 250 to 300 people. Letts was a well kept and busy small town during this time. There was hardly a house or a property that was not painted clean and neat.

The New York Central Railroad ran through the town and connected Indianapolis and Louisville. It was the lifeline of the community and in my youth had two passenger trains a day; south in the morning at 9:00 A.M. and north in the afternoon at 4:00 P.M. The trains delivered freight and mail in each direction and picked up cans of milk from the creamery as they went north each afternoon. I was told that at one time there were two trains each way every week day. These were powered by steam locomotives. Diesel engines replaced the steam engines in the middle 1930s.

There were three grocery stores in town. Prior to these three stores there was an original lone grocery which was owned by Fraley and Welch. This store was located east of the railroad and on the north side of the main street. It was jointly owned by Mr. Fraley and Dr. John Welch and operated during the years of the 1890s and the early 1900s. This building was torn down, and the vacant lot was used to show movies on Saturday night. Later the movies were shown on the east wall of the Taggart store.

The next store (66)\* opened about 1906 and was owned by brothers E.E. McCammon and John McCammon. The McCammon store was built by U.S. Parker, John McCammon's father-in-law. Ulysses Sheridan Parker had seen a store in Tennessee that struck his fancy, and he came back to Letts and built a store like it. The building had a wide stairs in the back that led to a landing which then branched out in two directions. These steps led to a

(Continued on page 2)



Continued from page 1)

balcony that went around the entire perimeter of the store bordered with a railing of spindles. Clothing, boots, and millinery were kept upstairs. The lower part was used for groceries, canned goods, cracker barrels, a pot bellied stove, etc... There was much bartering done then. Customers would bring in chickens, eggs, and butter to trade for groceries. Paul Sturgis drove a truck to Letts from the C.J. Lloyd poultry house (now Maddux Auction) in Greensburg two times a week to pick up chickens and eggs. In the middle was the ever popular candy case where nickels and pennies were spent. The McCammon store was not far from the school, and the students could go to the store at noon- time. The candy case could furnish sweets for a penny a piece. John sold his interest in the store to his brother, Bert, about 1916 and in partnership with J.R. Crawley bought the Letts grain elevator.

Another grocery store (48) was owned by Harry Taggart and was on the east side of the railroad and on the north side of the main street. The store was on the ground floor of the K of P. building with the lodge rooms above the store. The lodge had a spacious room for meeting and had a room in the back of the meeting room for pool tables. The lodge rooms were out of bounds for non-members and all the teenagers in the community. The teens managed to sneak entrance now and then which was great and exciting fun. Movies were shown on the east side of the building with the white wall serving as the screen. The Taggart store was run by Harry Taggart and his wife Zelma. The store stocked groceries on the west side of the store and dry goods on the east side. They were not much into the barter business. Their stock was shipped in by rail from Indianapolis. All of their stock came from the wholesale grocery of Knothe, Wells and Bauer. When the business began to move out of the small towns in the late 1930's and early 1940s, Harry moved to Greensburg and was a clerk for Leslie Palmer at the Leader Shoe Store until he retired. The vacant building was then occupied by Pohlman Hardware run by Bill and Earl Pohlman, which was later moved to State Road 3. In later years and presently the building is the Letts Fire Department.

There was a room in the back of this store (48a) that was used as a creamery. Farmers would bring their dairy products and sell them here. The products would then be shipped to Indianapolis or to Greensburg by rail each day. The creamery was run by Emory Skinner.

The third grocery store (49) was owned and operated by George Buening in the building directly east of the railroad and on the south side of the street across from the Taggart store. This building formerly housed the Charles Knarr restaurant. The Buening grocery sold items from the store, but its main business was in operating the three huckster trucks which covered all of the southern Decatur county and northern part of Jennings County. These trucks were operated by Stanley Witkemper, George AmRein and Joe Tebbe. The huckster trucks would carry a nearly complete line of staples and meats. They would also accept barter of eggs and chickens. The trucks would start out early in the morning and be on the road until 5:00 or 6:00 in the evening. They would unload their eggs and chickens and immediately restock the trucks for the next day. This was a six day a week operation. It was a very successful business until the 1930's when automobiles were more prevalent and people became more mobile. George Buening closed the store and bought a farm in the St. Paul area. Joe Tebbe went to Greensburg and became a Farm Bureau insurance salesman. Stan Witkemper had a store in Milhousen. George AmRhein operated a farm between Letts and Westport.

There was a very thriving hardware store (55) on the west side of the railroad and on the south side of the street. Ken Adams was one of the owners. The store handled a full line of hardware, gates, fencing, barbed wire, etc... The broad front porch was covered and was a favorite hang-out for the loafers, especially on Saturday afternoons. Arthur Tudor worked there, and when the store closed in the 1930s, he and his wife Eva moved to Greensburg, and he spent the rest of his work life at Corbett-Craig Hardware.

There were two garages in town for auto repair and maintenance. The original garage (32) was built by Dr. Welch for his son Russell who was married to Mabel Evans. Russell, of course, was Dr. Dickson's brother-in-law. The mechanics were Jim Parker and "Sonny" Clark, Jim opened his own repair shop in his father's blacksmith's shop (see 21 a). Jim could repair anything from a toaster, an iron, a refrigerator to an automobile. After his wife died, Jim worked in maintenance at Bohn Aluminum and had his own repair shop on East Central in Greensburg. When the Welch garage was sold, "Sonny" Clark moved to Greensburg and worked at McCoy and

(Continued on page 3)



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Douglas for many years. The garage had two gas pumps and sold Standard Oil products. The gas pumps had a glass tube at the top which had one gallon markings and held 10 gallons. By moving a handle back and forth on the side of the pump, you were able to fill the tube. Gravity then fed the gas into the automobile gas tank. For a two gallon purchase, you would lower the gas to the 8 gallon mark. It was hard to be accurate. The Welch garage was sold in the late 1920s to Ed Buening of Millhousen. It was operated by him until the 1950s when he went out of business as the town began to fade and the auto traffic was mostly on State Road 3, west of town. Bill Rethlake was the other mechanic here, and after the closing he moved to Greensburg and had his own shop on West Main Street across from the Trackage Restaurant. Ed Buening and Bill Rethlake built the first Letts fire truck on an old truck chassis.

The other garage (35) was owned and operated by Ernest Carder. Ernest was the sole mechanic here, and a group of regular customers and evidently did Ernest well as he raised a large family.

The Letts State Bank (33) was in business from the 1890s to the 1920s. Stockholders in this bank were Dr. Welch, Urso McCorkle, and Ken Adams. The bank went out of business when automobiles allowed travel to the Greensburg banks.

After George Buening bought the building where Charles Knarr had his restaurant, Charlie bought the bank building and operated a restaurant there until the 1930s. Urso McCorkle was the owner of the natural gas company which had wells east of Letts. Kenneth Adams was the owner of the hardware store. There was a barber shop (34) in a room in the back of the bank. Frank Carder (son of Ernest) barbered here for several years as did Howard Williams.

The other barber shop (9) was on the north side of the street and west of the railroad. There were many barbers over the years. The barber whose tenure was the longest was Howard "Butch" Williams who worked in Letts for 20 to 25 years. He moved to Greensburg in the late 1930s and was a barber there until his death. One of his sons, Lowell "Little Butch" Williams worked at C.H. Johnson and sons for many years. His other son, Bob Williams, became well-known as a sports writer for the Indianapolis Star. When we played basketball in the alley beside his house, he wrote up the games on one of those toy typewriters. Bob was 11 or 12 years old then. The barber shop was sold to Harry White. When the town began to fade, Harry went to Greensburg and worked in a barber shop owned by Walter "Watt" Curtis on West Main Street at the corner of Main and Monfort.

The Post Office was between McCammon's store (66) and the Barber Shop (64). The first postmaster was John Stout (Marian Stout Lawson's father). Marian was an elected office holder at the courthouse in Greensburg and was at the Union Trust Insurance for many years. The next postmaster was George "Hunk" Davis. He was the grandfather of Dale Myers who was at the First Federal in Greensburg for many years. Dale was reared by his grandparents. Pearl Beard was the last postmaster.

There was a general purpose building (67) next to McCammon's store that was owned by Charlie Knarr. The rear of the building was used for storage. The front of the building was used for Saturday night chili suppers and oyster stew suppers for raising funds for churches which at that time did not have facilities as they do now.

The railroad depot (48) was on the east side of the tracks and north of the main street. Wilbur Wasson was the first agent, followed by Herschel Root, then Ray Patrick, and then Dorsey Trapp. There was the usual waiting room for passengers next to the telegraph office. The freight building (47) was north of the depot where all of the incoming freight was stored until it was picked up. There were four iron-wheeled cars that were the height of the freight car floor. The agent would usually have the outgoing freight and the cream cans on the cart ready when the passenger train stopped. In the meantime, the postmaster locked up the Post Office and came down to meet the train and exchange out-going mail for the incoming mail. Passengers boarded or departed at the same time. This event was always an interesting and "looked forward to" event by everyone, especially the young people. When the train was not scheduled to stop, the railroad had a pick-up rack along the track south of the main street

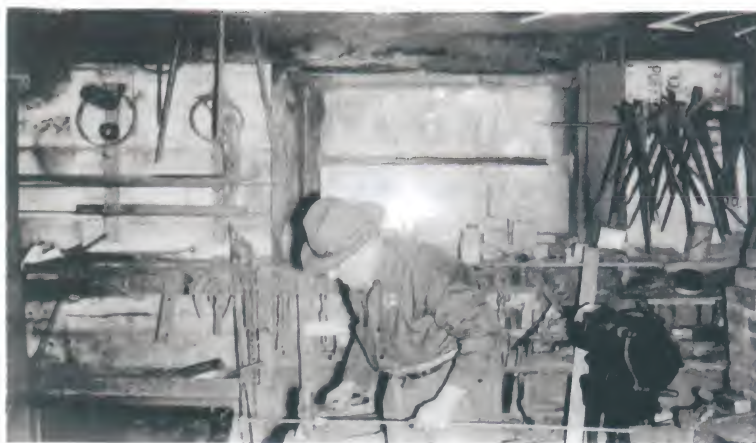
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## Enoch Parker

**Hard at work in his blacksmith's shop, Mr. Parker provided valuable services to residents of the Letts area for many years.**



### Membership Form

Have you paid your dues for 2010

Circle type of membership at left.

Membership rates are as follows:

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Family	\$ 25.00 per year
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Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues.



## Breakfast at Seitz' Restaurant

One of the popular eating places in Greensburg was this restaurant-a family-owned business serving local citizens for over sixty years. The restaurant is one of the enterprises described in the Historical Society's 20010-2011 calendar. The Museum has a breakfast menu from the restaurant, but a date for the menu is unknown. If you have an idea about the approximate date of the prices, please call the Museum.

Good  
morning

Greensburg. Restaurants.

## The Seitz Restaurant

### Breakfast Specials

#### No. 1—20c

Choice of Cold Cereal  
Toast or Rolls  
Coffee, Tea or Milk

#### No. 2—25c

Ham or Bacon  
With One Egg and Toast  
Coffee, Milk or Tea

#### No. 3—30c

Choice of Fruit Juice  
and Choice of Cold Cereal  
Toast or Rolls  
Coffee, Tea or Milk

#### No. 4—35c

Choice of Cold Cereal  
Ham or Bacon  
with One Egg  
Toast or Rolls  
Coffee, Tea or Milk

#### No. 5—35c

Home-Made Hot Cakes  
Country Sausage  
Coffee, Tea or Milk

#### No. 6—45c

Choice of Fruit Juices  
Home-Made Hot Cakes  
Country Sausage  
Coffee, Tea or Milk

### FRUITS AND JUICES

Sliced Manana with Milk	10	Bartlett Pears	. . . 15
Sliced Banana with Cream	20	Sliced Peaches	. . . 15
Berries (in season)	. . . 10	Fresh Orange Juice	10
Grapefruit Juice	. . . 10	Pineapple Juice	. . . 10
Grapefruit (half)	. . . 10	Sliced Pineapple	. . . 15
Melons (in season)	. . . . .	Tomato Juice	. . . 10
Fruit Salad	. . . . .	Sliced aBnana,	
Grape Juice	. . . . .	Hal fand Half	. 15
Canned Grapefruit	. . . 15	Apricots	. . . . 15

### CEREALS FOR HEALTH

With Half and Half—15c

With Milk—10c :-: With Cream—20c

Corn Flakes	Post Toasties	Shredded Wheat
Wheaties	Pep	Grape Nuts
Grape Nut Flakes	All Bran	Wheat Krispies
Rice Krispies	Puffed Wheat	
Hot Oat Meal	Hot Cream of Wheat	

### BAKED FOR BREAKFAST

Cinnamon Rolls	. . . 05	Toast and Jelly	. . . 10
Cinnamon Toast	. . . 10	Milk Toast	. . . 15
Fresh Doughnuts (2)	. 05	Toast	. . . . . 05
French Toast	. . . 15	Cookies	. . . . . 05
Home-Made Griddle Cakes with Syrup	. . . 15		

### EGGS AND MEAT

Omelet with choice of Jelly, Tomato, Cheese or Ham	20
Country Fresh Eggs, with Bacon, Ham or Sausages	30
Country Fresh Eggs (any style)	. . . . . 35
Plain Omelet	. . . . . 10
Bacon (3 strips)	. . . 20
Ham	. . . . . 30
Fried Pork Tenderloin	. . . . . 25
(Bread and Butter or Toast served with above orders)	

### BEVERAGES

Hoac Chocolate	. . . 05	Hot Tea	. . . . . 05
Breakfast Cocoa	. . . 10	Hot Tea (pot)	. . . 10
Buttermilk	. . . . . 05	Ice Cold Milk	. . . 05
Fresh Hot Coffee	. . . 05	Postum	. . . . . 05

## The Military Exhibit

The military exhibit at the Historical Society Museum during the summer of 2010 was not only interesting but highly significant because it presented opportunities for both young and old to be taught, or to remember, the sacrifices many have made to preserve the American heritage.

It took many hours of staff and volunteer work to assemble the memorabilia willingly provided by so many individuals. The Open House held in connection with the exhibit was especially well-attended, and the following Decatur County veterans were in attendance. Pictured are:

<b>Dave Stults</b>	<b>U.S. Navy</b>	<b>1958-1985</b>
<b>Dallas Whipple</b>	<b>Ind. National Guard</b>	<b>1963-1965</b>
<b>Charles Shirk</b>	<b>U.S. Army Air Corps</b>	<b>World War II</b>
<b>Kim Girts</b>	<b>U.S. Navy</b>	<b>Submarine Service</b>
<b>Stan Lemmons</b>	<b>U.S. Navy</b>	<b>Korean War</b>
<b>John Tumilty</b>	<b>U.S. Navy</b>	<b>Submarine Service</b>
<b>Jerry Westhafer</b>	<b>U.S. Air Force</b>	<b>1954-1958</b>

Not pictured but in attendance were Bill Boone and Henry Bicknell, veterans of World War II.





## How I Spent My Summer Vacation

By John Pratt

We all need a hero, especially when we are young. My hero was always Abraham Lincoln. His biography was the first book that I checked out at the library (thank you Martha Samuels). I used to have my hair cut so that it looked like I had sideburns (thanks Mr. Strasberger and Mr. Eubank). Growing up with three brothers and a sister, there was never much extra money for fancy vacations. In fact, we went on three. One to Hodgenville, Kentucky to see Lincoln's birthplace, then back to Kentucky to see the outdoor drama, "Lincoln," then the third to Southern Indiana to visit the Lincoln Boyhood Memorial. Now flash forward thirty-four years. I received the opportunity to spend an entire week in Springfield, Illinois, all expenses paid. So let me tell you what I did on my summer vacation.

This past spring I was honored to have been selected as a Horace Mann, Abraham Lincoln Fellow. Fifty teachers, one from each state, are chosen to spend an all expense paid week at the Abraham Lincoln Museum and Library in Springfield. The \$167 million dollar facility is the host for the educators that is underwritten by the Horace Mann Insurance Company. The facility opened in 2003. The teachers are separated into two groups, one attending in June and the other in July. I attended the June session. After a leisurely four hour drive across I-74 I found myself in the Illinois capital ready to immerse myself in the life our nation's most beloved President.

Activities of the week were separated into three categories: touring Lincoln sites, listening to historical lectures, and getting a "behind the scenes" look at the Lincoln Museum and Library. Touring the Lincoln sites in Springfield should be on everyone's to-do list. Our first stop was in New Salem, about a fifteen minute drive away. New Salem was Abe's first home in Illinois. It was here along the Sangamon River that he went to work as a store clerk, postmaster, and surveyor, and where he fell in love for the first time and where he first ran for political office. Although few artifacts and documents remain from those days, it is still worth the trip. It is now a wonderful living history community where you can see Lincoln's surveying equipment in the museum.

Lincoln's tomb is located just on the outside of Springfield in beautiful Oak Ridge Cemetery. On Tuesday evenings at 7:00 in the summertime there is a flag lowering procession put on by the 114<sup>th</sup> Infantry Illinois Volunteers-loved it! From there it was on to downtown Springfield, where the bulk of the sites are located. Just one block south of the museum is the Old State Capitol where Lincoln gave his "House Divided" speech and where Barack Obama announced his presidential candidacy. Just a few yards away is the Lincoln-Herndon Law Office where Willie and Tad would run amok. Keep walking southwest about six blocks, and you arrive at the Lincoln home. The beautiful (and modest) home is filled with original artifacts and is a must for any visitor.

The second part of the Lincoln fellowship experience encompasses historical lectures. One of the reasons I love the Chautauqua concept is that I find a good lecture to be highly motivating and enjoyable. The good folks at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum did not disappoint. Research historian Bryon Anderson spoke on "Lincoln's Illinois" and "Lincoln's Cabinet." The Illinois State Historian lectured on "Lincoln, Slavery, and Emancipation" and he was followed by Dr. Richard Hughes on the "Value of History." Rounding off the historical lectures were Mark Depue speaking on "The Art of Oral History" and Mark Johnson, speaking on "Newspapers of New Salem."

The third part of the week exceeded my expectations; we learned what goes on at a Presidential library and museum. This included fascinating topics such as how to handle original documents and how to authenticate them. Of course, Lincoln Documents were in abundance, but I was also able to work with such original letters as correspondence from General Grant to one of his commanders and Robert E. Lee's request for a pardon to President Andrew Johnson. On my own I was able to track down a request from leading Indiana state senators asking resident Lincoln to appoint our own Will Cumback as ambassador to Berlin (Will would go on to serve the resident as Union Paymaster). Repairing damaged documents is another art that was demonstrated. Wouldn't it be great if we had the facilities to accomplish this here!

The museum itself is very well done, combining historical artifacts and information in entertaining and



(continued from page 7)

captivating formats that attract audiences. The plaza is where the adventure begins, where you are greeted by the President and his family (made of rubber – great photo op). Journey One is the wing dedicated to the pre-presidential years, which includes a wonderful depiction of a slave auction and an interactive 1860 campaign room using a video tape made by the late Tim Russert. The Treasures Gallery was my favorite part of the museum as it highlighted the original artifacts (his hat that he wore while in office is featured which has his fingerprints on it from tipping his hat). The museum also has a signed copy of the Gettysburg Address.

The Presidential Years Gallery features murals of Ft. Sumter and Gettysburg, plus a four-minute audiovisual presentation entitled, "The Civil War in Four Minutes" which showed the devastation caused by the Civil War. For the ladies in the group, ball gowns are featured by the prominent women of the day. The museum also features a daily live performance of "Ghosts in the Library," and the movie, "Lincoln's Eyes" which includes special effects such as the roar of cannons. The cost for the museum is \$12 adults, \$9 seniors, children 5 – 15 \$6, and under 5 is free. I might add that I would highly encourage everyone to visit the library as well (open Monday – Friday, 9:00 – 5:00). There is a wonderful room just for browsing, plus the archive's room is very user-friendly and will give you the opportunity to work with original documents. A great place to start is to go to the museum website, click on "library," then search World Cat under Lincoln Collection and type in your topics of interest. I am sure you will find a piece of history that will be waiting for you.

I love teaching. Such a unique opportunity to learn so much about my hero and to interact with educators from across this great country would not have happened otherwise. Would I recommend the four- hour drive to Springfield to experience the life of the one who saved the union? Absolutely, yes! In fact, I would place it in my top 10 of favorite historical sites that I have visited. I always love mentally creating top 10's from life experiences, from concerts watched and states visited to books read or wildlife seen. Thus, as I close this article by sharing my top 10 list, know that a trip to Springfield is well-worth your time ( Doris Kearns Goodwin will be there greeting members on October 14 as they open a new exhibit, "Team of Rivals"). Also never forget where Lincoln's formative years took place.

John Pratt's TOP 10 Historical Sites Visited:1-USS Arizona Memorial 2-The Alamo 3-The Coliseum 4-Arlington Cemetery 5-Stone Mountain Civil War Battlefield (where my great grandfather and CMOH recipient Reuben Smalley bravely fought with the 83<sup>rd</sup> Indiana Volunteer Regiment) 6-Notre Dame Cathedral 7-Grassy Knoll 8-Mt. Rushmore 9-Oregon Trail Ruts and Interpretive Center, and 10-Lincoln Springfield Experience.



An original drawing of Lincoln's tomb in Springfield looks nothing like the modern day monument which is a part of the experience in Springfield, Illinois today.

## Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

### Current and Coming Events

The Victorian House with its collection of furniture and artifacts from the 19th to the early 20th century.

### Military Exhibit

Come and see the uniforms, weapons, photographs, posters, documents concerning Decatur County people in military action from the Civil War to Afghanistan. Exhibit open through the middle of October.

### September 18th (Saturday) Fall Festival

Artisan's Day at the Museum 1-4 p.m.  
Tours of the fronts and history of houses in downtown Greensburg  
Meet at the Museum on the hour from 1 to 4 p.m. Tour takes about an hour

### October

Saturday, October 9th Volunteer's Luncheon

Saturday, October 23rd Halloween at the Museum  
Fun things to do for kids and adults. Save the date. More information to come.

### November

Gallery  
Cases — Decatur County Attic  
Miscellaneous displays of toys, tools, needlework, documents, and books in the  
Museum Collections

Walls: Framed Documents and Paintings from the Museum Collections.

### December

Christmas Decorations — The Sweet Memories of Christmas

Christmas Open House (Sunday, Dec. 12, 1-4:00)

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*"The Bulletin"*

Memberships are payable by January 1st.  
Have you paid? Check your address label.

**Society's Officers**

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**Historical Society of Decatur County Museum**

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April  
thru December  
Museum phone/fax: 663-2764  
Email: dechissoc@etczone.net  
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# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 11 No. 3

Fall 2006

Greensburg, Indiana

### Epigraph

*In foreign relations, as in all other relations, a policy has been formed only when commitments and power have been brought into balance."*

*-Walter Lippman 1943*

### Historical Society Museum Dedication

**Sunday, September 10th**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Open house until 5:00 p.m.**

**See you there !**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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## ORVILLE THOMSON

### 1823 ~ 1910



Orville Thomson, veteran newspaper man, soldier and citizen died at his home at 312 East Central Avenue at six o'clock Wednesday morning, Sept 23, 1910. He was a man of remarkable vigor until stricken of paralysis on December 9 last, while walking home from his customary daily trip down on the square. Since then he had not been out of the house but was able to sit up a part of the time up to the day before his death. His death was due to general debility.

The deceased was a son of John and Spicy Hamilton Thomson who came to this county from Nicholas county, Kentucky, in the spring of 1823 and settled on a farm four miles northeast of this city near the home of R. A. Hamilton where Orville was born on June 20, 1823.

When a boy from seven to twelve years he attended the county schools in the winter and in the summer worked in his father's wool-carding factory. In 1834 the family moved to Greensburg and young Orville, his brother Origen and sister, Camilla, were enrolled in the Decatur County Seminary (\*\*located on SW corner of Franklin and McKee street) when it was opened by Prof. James G. May that fall.

In December 1835, when his father founded what is now *The Greensburg Standard* he began to learn the printer's trade, and he continued as printer, editor or publisher for practically all his life.

In 1843 he and Jacob W. Mills bought the *Greensburg Chronicle* from Judge Thomson and had charge of the same until 1851. He was still connected with the paper in some capacity most of the time until 1858 when he and his brother Origen, founded the *Lawrenceburg Press*. He lived there about two years. In 1860 he was employed on the *Indianapolis Journal* and during the war wrote articles from the field for that paper. After the war he was employed on *The Standard* for several years and in about 1880 established a job printing office which he conducted for about twenty years.

In 1882 he wrote much of the historical matter that appeared in the Decatur County Atlas and in 1897 and 1898 wrote a series of articles for *The Standard* that reviewed all the early history of the county. Practically all of the history of the county has been written by him. He had a vivid recollection and his writings were remarkably authentic and have attracted wide attention.

Mr. Thomson united with the Christian church in 1855 under the ministry of Rev. Joseph Lucas.

On the first call for troops in April 1861 he enlisted in Co. F. Seventh Indiana and in September reenlisted for three years in Co. G. of the same regiment and was elected First Sergeant. He was promoted to First Lieutenant and transferred to Veteran Relief Corps September 9, 1863, on account of disability received in the service and resigned April 9, 1864. He was a man of pronounced views on the question of the perpetuity of the nation and whether by sword or pen he exerted himself to the utmost to preserve the Union. In politics he adhered firmly to the principles of the Republican party and was prominent in the council of the party for many years.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Orville Thomson Obituary (continued from page one)

In his later years Thomson reflected much upon the "good old days" and was considered an infallible authority on all points touching the early history of the county. He was the oldest native of the county at the time of his death. He knew the history of the county because he had been a part of it. Hence his words were readily accepted as true.

The last work he did was to write the history of his old regiment and it may be considered the crowning work of his life. He took great pride in the "Old Seventh", and he labored long and hard to get its history in shape so it could be handed down to future generations. It was a hard task, and he met with many discouragements. When finally finished, the book received the unstinted praise of his comrades and the edition was soon disposed of. It is a creditable volumn of 250 pages and may be found in the library of every Seventh regiment man and many comrades of other regiments and citizens have it. He not only wrote this book, but he set the type for it without glasses after he had reached the age of eighty-two years.

In 1895 he published a book entitled "Crossing the Plains," telling of the experiences of a colony of Decatur county people who emigrated to Oregon in 1851. So, from 1835 to 1903 a period of sixty-eight years Mr. Thomson was actively engaged as editor and publisher, a record never attained by any one in this locality and equaled by few in the state. He was a useful man and a good citizen.

In his career as editor and publisher he was associated with his brother in laws, Davies Batterton and John J. Hazelrigg, (see next Obit) for many years. These men formed a trio of editorial writers that were hard to beat and were a potent influence in moulding the opinions of the voters of Decatur county for half century.

Mr. Thomson was married May 15, 1845, to Nancy J. Hazelrigg who died February 15, 1899. Eight children were born to them. Greeley and Camilla died in childhood, and a daughter Mrs. Alice Wade died at Wabash in 1884. Two sons; John P. and Charles H. and three daughters; Misses Mary and Lizzie, and Mrs. L. D. Braden survive. Also two sisters; Mrs. Camilla Donnell, of The Dalles, Oregon, and Miss Rosina Thomson and a half-brother, Jesse M. Thomson, of Cincinnati.

The funeral was held at the home yesterday afternoon at two o'clock, Rev. W. G. Johnston officiating, assisted by Rev. James B. Lathrop, the latter being a life-long friend of the deceased. The burial was in charge of "Pap" Thomas Post No. 5, G.A.R. of which the deceased was an honored member.

nb- from the Greensburg Standard, Sept. 25, 1910: this is the third in a series of obits about some of the early settlers and some later well-known men and women who lived and died and are buried in Decatur County. They are the ones who help shape Decatur County into what we have today \*\* Orville Thomson is buried in South Park in the Old Section, not far from the Soldiers Circle along the left side the road going west.

***\*\* I take great pleasure in announcing, that our new archive room in the addition at the Historical Society Museum will now be called the Orville Thomson Room, named after the really First Historian this county had. Without him we would not have the history of the early settlers and the beginnings of the county and this city, and for this we thank him and now we honor him.***

***Thanks Orville.***

Edited by, Russell Wilhoit

Decatur County Historian - July 2006



Left: Thomson's tombstone at South Park Cemetery



Right: Hazelrigg's tombstone at South Park Cemetery







## J.J. Hazelrigg 1839-1909

John J. Hazelrigg passed into the great beyond, at his home on North Broadway, at seven o'clock Thursday evening, after a long illness of a complication of diseases. He had been in delicate health for several years, but had been able to be on the street at intervals until about ten weeks ago. He knew his time had come and talked freely to his wife and son about his going away as if it were to some fair and happy clime. The end came peacefully as he sank away into a quiet sleep that shall know no waking until he shall open his eyes in that bright, eternal land of bliss, where many of his dear friends have gone on before. He had remarked that there were more on the other side than on this.

With the passing of Mr. Hazelrigg, one of the leading men in Greensburg has gone to his long home. Beginning his business career at the early age of seventeen, he had been intimately associated with the commercial, educational, and moral development of our people for an even sixty years.

He had seen Greensburg develop from a struggling village of some 500 people to a splendid city of 7,000 souls. During all this time John J. Hazelrigg bore a conspicuous part to the progress of our city. He was therefore proud of his home city, which he had helped to make.

John Jay Hazelrigg was the youngest child of John and Jane Hilles Hazelrigg, who emigrated from Bourbon County, Kentucky, in 1832, and settled on the old Hazelrigg homestead, one mile south-west of this city where their son, John, was born October 24, 1839.

In 1849, at the early age of ten years, young Hazelrigg entered *The Standard* office (then the *Decatur Press*) and began to learn the printer's trade under the tutorage of his brother-in-law, Orville Thomson, who is still living in this city, and the late Jacob W. Mills. Seven years later, in the fall of 1856, he and another brother-in-law, Davies Batterton, bought the Press and changed its name to the *Decatur Republican* to conform more closely to the same of the new political party it espoused. Mr. Hazelrigg continued as part owner of the *Republican* until January 1, 1863, when he became postmaster of Greensburg, under appointment of President Lincoln, and served for four years. In May, 1868, he again purchased *The Republican* and held it until October, 1872. On January 1, 1878, he again bought the paper and changed its name to *The Greensburg Standard*, and continued to publish it with the assistance of his two sons, Frank C. and Dix D., until October 1, 1894, when it was sold.

So, Mr. Hazelrigg was either owner or part owner of *The Standard* for a period of over thirty-seven years, and was connected with its publication in various ways for more than forty-seven years. But few men can claim so long service as editor and publisher. He was thoroughly indoctrinated in the principles of the Republican party from its incipency, by his associations with such strong characters as Jacob Mills, Davies Batterton, and Orville Thomson, and became an able writer and defender of the principles of national sovereignty and the preservation of the Union during the dark period of the Civil War, when men's souls were tried. A perusal of the files of the

paper in the 60's shows that Mr. Hazelrigg was a forceful wielder of the pen and a worthy successor to those who had preceded him. He stood four-square on all public and moral questions. As a temperance advocate he was very pronounced. He got up from his bed at the recent county option election to vote dry, remarking that he had waited a long time for that opportunity.

Besides his long newspaper experience Mr. Hazelrigg was engaged in numerous other enterprises. He was associated with his brother, the late William H. Hazelrigg, in the drug business, and was interested in the carriage manufacturing business for a time. He served an enlistment in the 76<sup>th</sup> Indiana regiment in July and August, 1862, and was the regimental postmaster. A few years ago he built the Hazelrigg theater, which was destroyed by fire soon after.

In 1862, under the ministry of the late D. R. VanBuskirk, Mr. Hazelrigg confessed and obeyed Christ and became a member of the Christian church, when it met in the old church on the railroad, and was thereafter an earnest and efficient worker in the church and Sunday school. When the new church was built at its present location in 1869, he contributed \$1,000 which he estimated at the time to be one third what he was worth. This incident shows his liberality in no uncertain way. For many years he was an elder in the church and always took a great interest in the church.

Mr. Hazelrigg was married in 1860 to Zella M. Rhiver, who died in 1869. Four children were born to them, two dying in infancy and two sons, Frank C. and Dix D., growing to manhood. The latter died in Missouri in 1899, and the former still survives. He was again married in 1872 to Nean M. Metcalf, who together with his son, Frank, are left to mourn. One brother, William H. Hazelrigg, died at Adams in 1888, and three sisters have preceded him in death—Mrs. Nancy Thomson in 1898, Mrs. Margaret Batterton in 1905, and Mrs. Mary O'Hair in 1908. One sister, Mrs. Lizzie Conner, of Noblesville, survives.

Funeral services were held at the home at 2:30 Saturday afternoon, Rev. W. G. Johnston officiating, assisted by Rev. James B. Lathrop. The latter had known the deceased since his boyhood, and spoke in highest terms of his integrity as a businessman and commended his example as a Christian citizen as worthy of emulation. The following nephews acted as pall bearers: John H. Batterton, Dan and Max Hazelrigg, J. P. and C. H. Thomson, of this city, and Harvey Stout, of Indianapolis. The burial was in the family lot in South Park Cemetery.

nb— taken from *Greensburg Standard*, a weekly newspaper, April 2, 1909, this is the fourth in a series of obits about some of the early settlers and founders of this county, who helped shape the city and county into what we have today.

\*\* John J Hazelrigg is buried in South Park Cemetery, just a about a row from Orville Thomson, who was his friend and partner for many years in newspaper business, so they now lie in peace close to each other for eternity.

Edited by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian- July 2006



## THE PRESIDENTS REPORT

By David Miers

It's with great pleasure to share with you that we are 99.9 % complete with the addition and restoration of the museum. It seems it was just last week that I was writing this report to inform you, the membership, that construction was going to begin and that all my reports in the future would be about the progress of the project. Here we are 11 months later and only a few things left on the "punch list" to finish.

When you enter the museum you will be astonished at the changes and improvements that have been made to the old house returning it to its glory of many years ago. The most notable change is the front porch, we have had Weberdings of Batesville make an exact replica of how the porch looked from a photograph of the house from the early 1900's. Also, a continual problem we have had in the past has been the maintenance of the deck. That has now been rectified with brick sub structure and a porch deck made from brick pavers. It has made the front entrance to the museum very attractive and inviting. Almost all the floors in the house have either been refinished or repainted, and several of the walls have been papered or repainted.

A big job has been to move and organize all our archival items into the new building and put all the furniture back in its place in the old house. We have had many volunteers and Board members very active in this process and all their help has been greatly appreciated. I'm not going to name everyone for fear of missing someone. But a big **THANK YOU** to everyone who has helped in this monumental process.

The Board has set the 10<sup>th</sup> of September for the dedication of the new museum. The dedication will begin at 2:00 pm at the museum and the museum will be open until 5:00 pm that day for your viewing pleasure. We hope to see you there.

DAVID

### Historical Society of Decatur County

#### Program and Presentation

#### "The Underground Railroad in Decatur County"

Presentation of the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Luther Donnell by Mary Elizabeth Donnell Mitchell to the Decatur County Historical Society Museum on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October at 2 p.m. After the presentation there will be a talk on the Underground Railroad in Decatur County by Bill Smith in the Gallery of the Museum. Luther Donnell, a farmer living in Fugit Township was an abolitionist and helped Blacks escaping from the slave states to reach freedom in Canada. In 1847 while helping a slave woman, Caroline, and her four children escape he was caught and arrested. His trial in 1849 was held in the old courthouse on the site of the present one. He was convicted and fined \$1,500. Later in 1852 the Indiana Supreme Court reversed the decision. At the moment the Underground Railroad Initiative is considering a request for a marker at the Decatur County Courthouse about the case and one at Kingston in honor of Caroline. Please join us at the Museum on October 15<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.

#### HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL— Payable annually by January 1st—P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240

Individual ... \$10.00 Family ... \$15.00 Contributor ... \$30.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State, ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## Museum Musings

by Diana Springmier, Director

With most of the boxing and unboxing and returning the Museum back to quasi-normal behind them, the staff and volunteers are preparing to open for you and the community on Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. This will initiate returning to the regular Saturday/Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 hours. In addition, the museum will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The obituary files which have formerly been housed at the Greensburg Daily News office are now available to the public in the meeting room of the museum's addition on the first floor. If one needs to access these files at other times than the museum's open hours, call Russell Wilhoit at 812-552-5595, Charity Mitchell at 663-5141, or Susan Ricke at 663-8365.

Helen Hamilton will meet with the museum's volunteers on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, to familiarize them with the functions served by the addition. If you know of a friend who would be interested in volunteering a couple of hours every few months, call Helen at 663-8323.

The following volunteers have given more hours than one could tally the past year emptying rooms of furniture and packed boxes so floors could be refinished and carpeting laid, then unpacking boxes and moving all back to its original area. Also all of the museum's textiles have been indexed, photographed for the computer and packed in acid free paper. Others have sewn curtains, filed archives, and built shelves. Those who have been involved daily are Charity Mitchell, Russell Wilhoit, Susan Ricke, Judy Muckerheide and Nita McCoy. Also willing to help when needed were Reed Schuster, Lauren Wenning, Katie Beard, Ginny Garvey, Linda Volk, Polly Matlock, Dennis and Susan Wilson, Greg Meyers, Lois Carol McCormack, Tom Ricke, Luke Ricke, Helen Hamilton, Bob and Rita Simmonds, Janet Power, Jane Brown, Libby Springmier, Tyler Springmier. A very special thanks to Brett McCoy for donating a computer for the archive room and performing maintenance on our main computer.

David Miers as President of the Board of Directors of the Historical Society of Decatur County has been heading the building committee, serving as liaison between the architect and the builders, and dealing with the unexpected day-to-day questions to be addressed with the project as with all building projects of this scope. We thank you all for sharing your busy schedules with this major society undertaking.

The office is already booking meetings, art exhibits, scout troops etc. for fall 2006 and early 2007. Call the museum, 663-2764 or me at 663-2997 for scheduling your group visits.

Diana

Helen Hamilton will meet with the museum's volunteers on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, to familiarize them with the functions served by the addition. If you know of a friend who would be interested in volunteering a couple of hours every few months, call Helen at 663-8323.

### Trip Around Decatur County

Jane Brown has graciously agreed to give another tour of Decatur County for all those who missed the tour in April. In order to know how many and who would like another trip, please call Charity Mitchell (663-5141) with this information. Thank

Many thanks to the following businesses for selling cards, ornaments, videos, and DVD's from the Historical Society:

Chamber of Commerce, Greensburg Camera & Photography, and Unique Gifts.

The Greensburg 1937 (VHS and DVD) and Greensburg 1959 films (VHS and DVD) are available at the Chamber of Commerce, Greensburg Camera, and Unique Gifts.

Please patronize these businesses when you can.

*Don't forget to check your address label for your membership expiration date. If you have not paid your dues, this could be your last copy of "The Bulletin".*



## Millhousen is Quaint, unique

Most Picturesque Little Town

In the Country is Known as

### German Settlement

Church, Schools, Business Houses  
And Early History of Unusual Interest



The white cross in the foreground indicates the location of the original church.

Millhousen, Ind., - The most picturesque town in Decatur County is Millhousen, situated on Squaw Run, in the southeast part of Marion township, and has a population of about four hundred.

The town does a good business, being the center of a large German population which extends into the adjoining counties.

The citizens of this little town are, almost to a family, Germans, and in all their private relations of life they are honest, hospitable to all. They bid welcome to their habitations and are always glad to make you their guest.

#### Brief Historical Notes.

The following brief mention of the town as it was in years gone by will doubtless be of interest:

The first man\* to settle on the present site of Millhousen was Maximilian Schneider (1799-1870) in the year 1839, and he entered a section of land that year, a part of which Millhousen is located on. He built the first house on the town site the same year, and it was a large brick, two story "L" shaped, and the house still stands and is occupied by Joseph Herbert. (it is still standing, recently remodeled-2005)



Schneider Home still stands and was remodeled in 2005

#### Why the Streets Run in Every Direction

One year later—in 1840—Mr. Schneider laid off the town, and to the great surprise and disgust of the latter day residents, he laid it off in directions to suit the location of his then most elegant "L" shaped residence, and that fully explains to the people of today how and why Millhousen's streets run in zig zag directions and "forty ways from Sunday." It is a notorious fact that not one street in the town runs for one hundred yards in the same direction—let the pedestrian or the driver of a rig start in an eastern direction on one of the streets and in less than it takes to tell it he will be headed and going due north. Millhousen certainly has the worst "momixed" up streets of any town in the world.

The first store kept in Millhousen was by Maximilian Schneider in 1841, and he was also the first postmaster of the town.

The grist mill with its three burrs for grinding wheat and corn was opened and operated by Barney Hardebeck in 1852, and in 1853 he added a saw mill equipped with the old time "up and down" saw, and both mills were run by steam. These mills were located on the ground where the Whitkemper hotel now stands, and were in constant operation until 1873, when, in the language of one of Millhousen's citizens, "the panic knocked them hell west and crooked."

Mr. Hardebeck built and also tried his hand at running a woolen factory in 1865, and with this enterprise he did well until 1873, when the panic\* (\*Panic of 1873-Bank failures) knocked the financial props from under this enterprise along with his milling proposition. He was forced to dispose of his factory, selling it to Bernard Zapfe (1836-1906), Bernard Brinkman (1810-1879?) and Adam Stahl, who operated it only a few months when it was consumed by fire. The same year they built in its stead a new factory building of brick, continued the business for a time, sold the machinery to foreign parties,

(Continued on page 7)



(Continued from page 6)

retired the business and sold the buildings to Casper Vocke (1825-1913) who installed therein a stave factory and operated it for two years at the end of which time both the business and building were abandoned. The building finally toppled over, never to be rebuilt.

Herbert & Rhors established a tannery here in 1870, and Mr. Rhors died in 1908, but the business is still continued by Mr. Herbert.

In 1865, Mrs. E. Moorman erected a grist mill here, and her sons, Joseph and Frank, operated the same for a period of ten years when the mill was abandoned and the building leased to George Bessler, who came here from Cincinnati in 1875 and fitted up a furniture factory in the same, running it for a period of five years, employing some half dozen men, and did well, but on account of lack of railroad or shipping facilities could not compete with railroad towns and quit.

In 1890 Herbert & Rohrs erected a large and well equipped flouring mill, and the same is being operated today by Harry Herbert, (1880-1914) who does custom grinding and saw mill work.

A planing mill was established here in 1852 by Christian Ruhl (1807-1892) who did a flourishing business for a while.

Francis Verkamp (1815-1891) owned and operated a sash and door factory in 1856, and had remarkable success. He continued in business for several years and when he died in 1891, His factory doors were closed never to be reopened.



Catholic Church in 2006

### Catholic Church

The first Catholic church in Decatur County was organized at Millhousen, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1840, a rude log church building, with a rough exterior, chinked and daubed, twenty by forty feet, was erected under the auspices of the Rev. Father Joseph Ferneding, a missionary priest.

As time passed on the increase of the Catholics of Millhousen was surprising, wherefore they determined to build instead of the wooden chapel a good sized brick church, thirty-eight by forty feet. This was built in 1850, still stands and has been converted into a splendid school building which stands on a lot adjoining the church on the east.

In 1865 the erection of a new, modern and one of the finest and largest churches in the county was begun, and after four years labor it was completed in 1869, and stands today as a monument to the devotedness and liberality of the Catholics (both living and dead) of Millhousen and vicinity, and speaks more eloquently than marble and granite.

This handsome church structure is a brick, stone foundation, one hundred forty feet in length, fifty-five feet wide and forty-six feet high; has a large clock in the cupola as well as four bells of the chime order, and the sweet and chanting chimes of these four great bells may be heard echoing and re-echoing amid the far distant hills and valleys every Sunday morning throughout the years.

Recently three new altars were placed in the church at a cost of two thousand dollars.

The church interior is beautifully and artistically frescoed, contains a pipe organ placed therein at a cost of two thousand dollars, is heated by natural gas, but as the News scribe is writing this item the work of installing a new heating system—that of hot air—is in progress, and will be completed by November first. This church property is worth between fifty and sixty thousand dollars, to say nothing of its furnishings which run up into the thousands.

The Rev. J. Adam Urich is the present pastor (1913) and has been for near ten years. He was born in Vanderburg County, this State, February 16, 1863, being fifty years of age. He attended common school until fourteen years of age when he entered St. Meinrad College in Spencer County, Ind., and here he devoted himself to hard studies for a period of nine years, and at the age of twenty-three was ordained priest by the Right Rev. Bishop Francis Silas Chatard, of the Indianapolis Diocese. His first appointment was at St. Ann, Jennings county, where he remained in charge of the church for eighteen years, and in 1894 was transferred to Millhousen.

Rev. Father Urich is a polished scholar, earnest in his endeavors to persuade his people to live an honorable, upright Christian life, and his whole heart is earnestly devoted to his chosen life's work. He is a pleasant and most agreeable gentleman, and we richly enjoyed the time spent in his

### Magnificent Home

which is called the parsonage, or Priest House. It was erected in 1856, is a two story brick, eight rooms, and was at one time the finest parsonage in all southern Indiana. The household furnishings are of the very finest and best, and is truly an ideal home.

The church has a membership numbering 750 (in 1913). Sermon and High Mass at 10 o'clock a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Also Communion Mass Sundays and Holy Days. Catechism instructions for children

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from six to sixteen years of age every Sunday afternoon at two o'clock. Sister Leonisse presided at the organ and there is a splendid choir of male and female voices.

#### Millhousen Schools

The first school house build by the Catholics in Decatur County was at Millhousen in 1854 by Messrs. Hardebeck, Strawback and Rhul, being a private enterprise, and the first school was taught by Leon Lehman, during the year 1854.

In the year 1880 a new school house was erected by donatons from emembers of the Catholic church and furnished by the township trustee. It stands just across the street and opposite the church on the north. It is a one story brick, 56x36 feet, and in addition to its two school rooms contains apartment for the homes of the teachers. It cost \$4,000.

Just east of the church and on an adjoining lot stand the old church building, which has been converted into a school house consisting of two rooms.

Sister Leonisse is principal of the schools and has charge of grades five, six, seven, and eight. She teaches agriculture, domestic science and industrial work to pupils of grades seven and eight, in addition to the other studies, and also teaches music and German in all grades and departments. Sister Leonisse is one of the oldest and most successful teachers in the county, having taught for thirty-three years, and the work done in the Millhousen schools is thorough. She takes great pride and interest in the prosperity of the schools and their excellence is largely due to her efforts. In her department are forty-two students.

In the new building in room one are grades one and two—primary department—and in room two, grades three and four.

Sister Hilda has charge of room one, grades one and two, primary department, with fifty pupils, while Sister Manetta instructs the scholars of room two, grades three and four, and has an enrollment of forty-nine—making total enrollment of schools of 141 pupils.

#### Business Men

Millhousen has some wide-awake and enterprising business men today. Among them we mention George (died 1931), John (died-1946 and Louis Scheidler (died 1937?), who conduct a general wood work shop, painting and trimming of buggies, carriages, etc., blacksmithing, machine repair work, etc., and John is said to be one of the finest and best mechanics in the county.

Ed Henger conducts a livery bard; Dr. Nicholas C. Baumann is a practicing physician and surgeon; Ed Henger is the village blacksmith; Dr. J. Cressie Glass is the dispenser of drugs, practicing physician, postmaster, dealer in agricultural implements, etc.; Mrs. Minnie Moorman conducts a general store; Joseph Pfeifer (1847-1934) is an undertaker as well as a first class tonsorial artist; Harry Herbert (1880-1914) runs the flouring and saw mill. Ben Herbert (1880-1917) is in charge of a harness shop; Mrs. Mollie Herbert manages a lunch counter; Barney Zapfe conducts a first class general store and John Whitkemper and Will Link deal in "wet" goods.

\*there is some question whether Maximilian Schneider was the first settler and founder of Millhousen, he never bought any land till 1838, and there were others who had bought land in 1836 and 1837, he could have been there by then but record says differently, we might never know for sure. **This is the** same for the date on the sign (on right when you enter town), it says founded in 1834, but again earliest land deeds only date to 1836.

Authprs note, I could not find the burial spot for Maximilian Schneider. I do believe he is buried in the church cemetery in Millhousen, if anyone knows for sure, please contact the author.

\*\* First printed on Oct.10,1913 in the Greensburg Standard, edited and added to by

Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian:

July 16, 2006

This was third in a series of articles about the small towns in Decatur County around the turn of the last century. In the next issue, we will travel to Adams in Adams Twp.





## A Commentary on the Careers of two Decatur County Newspapermen,

Orville Thomson and John J. Hazelrigg,  
and Orville Thomson's Legacy as a Historian

By

Calvin D. Davis

Professor Emeritus of History

Duke University

Originally published in *The Greensburg Standard*, these obituaries are brief biographies of two men who made that newspaper one of the great Indiana weekly newspapers of the nineteenth century. Orville Thomson, moreover, wrote more of the county's history than any other person during his life time.

In 1835 Orville Thomson's father, John, announced that he would publish a newspaper to be called the *The Greensburg Repository*. It would be, he said, "a family newspaper, independent, but not neutral." He may have been trying to assure prospective readers that it would not be excessively partisan. Some people may have had doubts when they read the first issue in December, for on its masthead was a statement, "The Union, the Constitution and the Enforcement of the Laws." These words sound like patriotic platitudes today, but when John Thomson wrote them, readers would have understood that he firmly opposed the idea of John C. Calhoun, recently vice-president of the United States and currently a South Carolina senator, that states had the right to nullify Federal laws. *The Repository* made clear Thomson's support for the Whig Party which called for the nomination by the Whigs of General William Henry Harrison, Indiana's first territorial governor and a former Ohio senator, for the Presidency. Thomson's newspaper would be a Whig newspaper until the party fell apart after the Kansas-Nebraska bill became law on May 30, 1854. Thereupon it became a Republican paper and remained so throughout its history. It consistently advocated temperance and always gave approval to Christian piety; it maintained these attitudes despite frequent changes of its name and ownership. In 1868 on one of the several occasions when he was buying the paper, John J. Hazelrigg renamed it *The Greensburg Standard*, and that would be its name until its owners stopped publication in 1925.

Several months before publication of *The Repository* began, Thomson's son, Orville, became the first pupil to enroll in the Decatur County Seminary. The county had welcomed the state government's plan for a system of secondary schools which would charge moderate fees and had built for its seminary an almost square brick building with a cupola on the southwest corner of the intersection of South Franklin and McKee streets. (The building still stands, a private residence, sometimes of two families. It no longer has a cupola.) James G. May, the seminary's first teacher and superintendent, never forgot "a bright little boy of full habits, apparently about eleven years of age, and for that age well grown" who appeared on the first day of school in January 1835. The boy told May his name was Orv Thomson. "Don't spell Thomson with a p," he warned. Orv brought books he had studied in other schools and May learned that he knew what was in them. Orv made rapid progress; when John Thomson began publishing *The Repository* in December Orv was able to help. He learned to set type and to operate the press. As he grew up he became proficient with these tasks and began writing articles for the paper.

In 1843, when Orville was twenty years old, John Thomson sold the paper, now called *The Chronicle*, to him and Jacob W. Mills. The partners continued John Thomson's work without difficulty. Orville on May 14, 1845, married Nancy Hazelrigg, a daughter of John J. Hazelrigg, Sr. who was, like Orville's father, a prosperous settler from Kentucky. Apparently Nancy's mother had died some time before, for her name does not appear in records the present writer has seen. When the elder Hazelrigg died on October 3, 1846, Orville became administrator of his estate, and Nancy and Orville had responsibilities for the care of Nancy's younger sisters and brothers. Help came when her sister Margaret married Davies Batterton, a native of Bloomington and an 1847 graduate of Indiana University. Batterton had become head of the seminary, a position he retained for two years. In 1849 he became managing editor of the newspaper while his nineteen-year-old brother-in-law, William H. Hazelrigg, was publisher. Orville had given up the paper for a time. It should be noted, however, that William was living with Orville and Nancy when the census-taker called in 1850. That individual also found that eleven-year-old John J. Hazelrigg, Jr. was living with Davies and Margaret. Already Orville had taught John to set type and to do other work in the newspaper office.

Orville Thomson, meanwhile, had established his own printing office. Around the square merchants had stores and doctors and lawyers had offices, and Greensburg had several churches. Certainly there were people who needed printing, but the total population was only about 1200. It is not likely that Orville had enough work to keep him busy. In 1853 he bought the paper from Davies and William, only to sell it back to them three years later. As his obituary points out, Orville and his younger brother, Origen, tried to establish a newspaper in Lawrenceburg but gave up the attempt after two years. In 1860 Orville was working for *The Indianapolis Journal*. Meanwhile, Davies Batterton was also changing positions. He was establishing a drug store on the west side of the square; in 1856 he became one of the

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first Republican members of the Indiana House of Representatives. After renaming the paper *The Decatur Republican*, Davies and George sold it to John Hazelrigg and George W. Rhiver in 1858. John was nineteen years old and George about twenty-four, but both young men were ready for the demanding work of a newspaper.

There was much to command the attention of everyone in Greensburg during the 1850s. The state had abolished the seminaries in 1852 and in all communities which had had one there was debate over the kind of secondary school which should replace it. In Greensburg no decision was arrived at until after the Civil War; a high school opened in 1869. In 1854 the court house was torn down and a brilliant twenty-nine-year old architect, Edwin May, began construction of a new building. While it took him nearly six years to complete the court house and the editors of *The Republican* saw what he was doing almost every day, they had little to say about the project. They had much to say about another construction – the building of the Indianapolis and Lawrenceburg railroad through Greensburg in 1853, and they were as interested in a telegraph line. Davies Batterton on June 10, 1853, published in the paper (at the moment called the *Decatur Press*) a paragraph entitled "Telegraph Line:"

We want a telegraph line connecting this point with Cincinnati and the rest of the world – We must have it – we can't do without it and we won't. We are a fast people and it is necessary to our comfort and our business. How is the work to be done? Who wants to pave the way to a seat in Congress and immortalize himself by devising the means whereby this great want of the people can be supplied? Will the railroad company do it, or shall it be left to private enterprise? Hurry up the pancakes.

The pancakes were indeed hurried up. Builders of railroads found that the telegraph was essential for their operation. Private enterprise completed a telegraph line through Greensburg in 1854. At the same time the railroad was making it possible to send hogs and cattle directly to markets rather than driving them down the rutted, often muddy Michigan Road to markets in the Ohio river towns. Some entrepreneurs butchered hogs and cattle in Greensburg and shipped meat to dealers in Cincinnati and Lawrenceburg. Hogs had been a nuisance in the court house square, for owners let the animals wander where they wished. One wonders if some of these animals ended up as pork pickled in brine in barrels on the trains which passed through Greensburg. Certainly pork barrels became a feature of grocery stores in Indiana and elsewhere — and even influenced political jargon. Today we all know the meaning of "pork barrel politics," although few of us have ever seen a pork barrel.

The railroad and telegraph meant that Greensburg newspapers could get news of national and international significance quickly, although reprinting articles from other newspapers and letters of travelers continued to be a practice of *The Republican* as it did of other small-town newspapers. The railroad also brought to Greensburg speakers from Cincinnati, and *The Republican* reported on the speeches they made.

Plans for a railroad far greater than the railroad through Greensburg was of overriding importance in American politics during the 1850s. A railroad to the west coast seemed absolutely necessary if the new state of California was to be integrated into the country. The Compromise of 1850 had seemed to settle the most serious questions about the slavery question in the huge Mexican Cession. California, rapidly settled as a result of the famous Gold Rush, had been admitted to the Union as a free state while the question of slavery remained ambiguous in the rest of the Mexican Cession. Debate began about the location of a railroad. Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois got the idea of repealing the Missouri Compromise of 1821 which had provided that the act admitting Missouri to the Union as a slave state would also prohibit introduction of slavery into the remaining Louisiana Purchase territory north of the line of 36° 30'. Prospective settlers were showing interest in the vast grass lands which would become Kansas and Nebraska, and Douglas thought it necessary that these areas be settled before a railroad could be built through them; but many Southerners preferred a more southerly route. Why not, Douglas reasoned, repeal the Compromise? Southern slave holders as well as Northern opponents of slavery would then be interested in settling the Great Plains and Southern statesmen would support a northern route. Congress did as he asked. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 repealed the Missouri Compromise. As a result in many communities throughout the North there were protests. Whigs began to leave their party, and many Democrats believed Douglas and other leaders had betrayed them. In Greensburg a meeting of Washington Township Democrats passed a resolution condemning the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Dissidents of both parties united in nominating a young Greensburg lawyer, Will Cumbback, for the Fourth District seat in Congress.

*The Decatur Press*, soon to be *The Decatur Republican*, was much interested in Cumbback's career, and its editors were disappoint-

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## The Bulletin

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ed when he failed to win reelection in 1856. The Democratic candidate was another Greensburg man, James B. Foley, a respected businessman and public servant who won easily enough over his young opponent. In fact it seemed as though the Democrats were recovering from the effects of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. James Buchanan, the Democratic Presidential candidate, defeated the Republican candidate, General John C. Fremont. Buchanan was inaugurated on March 4, 1857. Two days later the Supreme Court handed down the Dred Scott decision – probably the worst decision it ever made. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney declared that the Missouri Compromise had been unconstitutional all along. Southerners were overjoyed. This meant that Congress could not reenact a prohibition on slavery in any part of the Louisiana Purchase still in the territorial stage. A “lame duck,” Will Cumback was in Congress when the Dred Scott decision was announced. The next day he addressed the House of Representatives, scathingly denouncing the high court’s decision. He soon won approval from Horace Greeley in the famous editor’s *New York Tribune*. Cumback returned to Greensburg a recognized leader of the Republican Party in southeastern Indiana.

John Hazelrigg and George Rhiver were keen observers of politics. When Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate in the Illinois senatorial election of 1858, debated incumbent Senator Stephen A. Douglas in towns in seven Illinois congressional districts, the editors of *The Decatur Republican* carefully studied their speeches and published articles about them. The critical moment in the debate came when Lincoln challenged Douglas to clarify his position on slavery in the territories. Douglas’ reply was the Freeport Doctrine; he said that the people living in territories could keep slavery out if they chose by simply refusing to pass laws governing slavery. Hardly anyone was convinced. In the North Democrats lost confidence in him and began to listen more attentively to Republican leaders. In the South opinion turned against him for Southern slavery interests liked the Freeport Doctrine not at all. The Dred Scott decision had denied the right of the Federal government to interfere with the introduction of slavery, and that was the way they wanted it. Douglas seemed to be trying to give away what they thought they had won.

Of course *The Decatur Republican* editors could not foresee what would happen in 1860 and 1861, but in 1858 they read what Lincoln had said and decided he was their choice for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1860 and said so in *The Republican*. Later they claimed that their paper was the first Indiana newspaper to call for Lincoln’s nomination – a claim which has never been refuted. In early 1860 the front page of every issue called for the nomination and election of Abraham Lincoln and urged nomination and election of Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania as vice president. John and George never explained satisfactorily their support of Cameron. Perhaps too much was happening for them to consider their every move. On April 19 they suffered the loss of a wise counselor. Davies Batterton died in the thirty-sixth year of his age. This tragedy did not long slow their interest in the campaign. In May they went to Chicago for the Republican National Convention. Returning to Greensburg they told their readers they could not honestly say that they had helped persuade the convention to nominate Lincoln, but “at any rate we have the man of our choice and we are satisfied – entirely so.”

There was much to claim the attention of Hazelrigg and Rhiver after the convention adjourned. Enthusiastic Lincoln supporters in Greensburg and other Decatur County towns organized “Wide-Awakes” groups which often went elsewhere to march, sing, and shout Lincoln slogans. Cumback, who knew Lincoln personally, campaigned for him in Indiana and in other states. As an elector-at-large in the Electoral College, he cast the state’s first vote for Abraham Lincoln. Throughout his life the Greensburg statesman would say that the day on which he cast that vote was the proudest day of his life. In Greensburg there was rejoicing as people learned of Lincoln’s election, but soon they had reasons for anxiety. Secession of the cotton-growing southern states began with South Carolina’s secession on December 20. Other states followed South Carolina’s example. At Montgomery, Alabama on February 8, 1861 the seceded states established a provisional government for the Confederate States of America. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was inaugurated as provisional president on February 18. Meanwhile the inauguration of Lincoln as President of the United States was approaching. On February 12 – his birthday – the President-elect and his party stopped in Greensburg. Lincoln spoke for about a minute to the crowd which gathered, and then the train moved on. In *The Decatur Republican* there was a brief account of the event – a rather disappointing report to anyone who has read the many outstanding articles in its files. *The Republican* would do better in regards to other dramatic events which soon occurred. On April 12 there came over the telegraph wires a report that at 4:30 A.M. that morning Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard had fired on Ft. Sumter in Charleston harbor. Within a few hours Major Robert Anderson, the Union commander, had been forced to surrender the fort.

Citizens of Greensburg and Decatur County were quick to respond to President Lincoln’s call for volunteers to fill state militia rolls. From the county came men who served in the famous Indiana Seventh Voluntary Infantry Regiment. For the Thomson, Hazelrigg, and Rhiver families it was of particular interest. Orville Thomson served in the regiment during both its three-month and three years phases. John Hazelrigg had married in 1860 George Rhiver’s sister, Zella, and it must have been as difficult for them to tell George goodbye as it had been to watch Orville board the train, although George was going to the Seventh Regiment as a member of the Greensburg band, he did not expect to be a combatant. In 1862 the War Department sent all bands home. George Rhiver died in Greensburg on April 21, 1862 a short time after returning home. John Hazelrigg would be sole editor of the paper until he sold it to Dr. S.H. Riley and

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associates in 1863. As editor he performed well, publishing excellent articles and letters from Orville and other soldiers. He himself served briefly in a regiment organized to pursue guerrillas in Kentucky. Appointment by President Lincoln as postmaster of Greensburg brought him much prestige in the community and in the local Republican party, but it also brought new responsibility. Then came another tragedy. John and Zella had a son whom they had named for George. In August 1863 the little boy fell ill. After six days of terrible suffering, the child died on August 19. Soon thereafter John sold the newspaper.

We know little about the paper from the time John Hazelrigg sold it in late 1863 until he again bought it and became publisher in January 1868. There are no files for 1865, 1866, and 1867, and there are only three 1864 issues. They are in the Indiana State Library. That library also has one issue of *The Decatur County Press* for July 4, 1866 - which Orville Thomson had edited. Orville's efforts at founding another newspaper were short lived. Two years later when John purchased *The Republic* - at the moment called *The Chronicle* - he asked Orville to become associate editor. Orville accepted. As we have noted, in 1868 John Hazelrigg renamed the paper *The Greensburg Standard*, a name it would retain for the rest of its history. John sold the paper in 1872; in 1878 he bought it back. Fortunately the frequent selling and buying back ceased in 1878. With the help of John's sons, John and Orville ran the paper until late 1893 when Orville's son-in-law, Luther Braden, became publisher. In 1918 Braden and E. J. Hancock became owners of *The Greensburg Daily News*, a paper which had begun publication in 1894. *The News* required much of them and the availability of an outstanding daily newspaper meant there was no longer a large demand for a weekly, even one as good as *The Standard*. In December 1925 *The Standard* ceased publication, exactly ninety years since John Thomson's *Repository* first appeared.

As editors of the *Standard*, 1868-1872 and 1878-1893, John Hazelrigg and Orville Thomson were as interested in the Republican party, temperance, and the Christian faith as they had been before the Civil War. The format of the paper was much better than had been that of *The Republican*. The type was better - clearer and larger. No longer did too much ink get on the press as it did so often during the 1860s. The paper was able to publish more national and international news, but the opportunities for personal involvement in great issues such as those John Hazelrigg and George Rhiver experienced before the war no longer seemed to occur.

Further consideration of *The Standard's* history must await another occasion; but it is necessary to stress that in the early 1880s and during the ten years from 1894 to 1904 Orville Thomson wrote his most important historical works. He was the author or co-author of essays and biographical sketches which in 1882 appeared in the *Atlas of Decatur Co., Indiana* published by J.H. Beers & Co. in Chicago. Many such county atlases appeared during the 1880's. In addition to maps they invariably included essays about the county history. The Decatur county atlas is one of the finest county atlases published in Indiana at that time, and Orville Thomson was the writer who contributed most to the making of the atlas. Any person interested in American history, whether his interest focuses on the nation, the state, or the county, will find much of value in this great book.

When Luther Braden became publisher of *The Standard*, he encouraged his father-in-law to write about early days in Fugit township, about the history of the county's newspapers, and about the Seventh Infantry. Orville published articles about all three subjects in the *Standard*, and he began to write a book about the Seventh Infantry. He completed the book in early 1904, printing it in his own shop and turning it over to a book binder who put it into a gray binding. When Orville began to sell it in March of that year he had trouble keeping up with demand. The book received high praise. No one said anything about its many typographical errors. Perhaps readers knew that the eighty-one-year-old author's eyesight was failing and he would not wear glasses.

In 1993 Butternut and Blue, a Baltimore firm which specializes in Civil War history, republished Orville Thomson's *Narrative of the Service of the Seventh Indiana Infantry in the War for the Union* as the second volume of its *Army of the Potomac* series. Butternut and Blue put the reprint into an attractive green binding but made no attempt to reproduce what Orville had printed on the original gray cover. There the title was *7<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry in the War for the Union*. Below that title in a rectangle was this statement:

MUCH OF WHICH I SAW;

MUCH OF WHICH I AM.

Orville Thomson in these words said what he could also have said about his many historical articles. He did research into records in connection with several of them, and he interviewed other people, but his most important primary sources were his own recollections. While basing his articles largely upon memories, he structured each as a historical study. The great Greensburg newspaperman was a better historian than he himself knew.

*"I take great pleasure in announcing, that our new archive room in the addition at the Historical Society Museum will now be called the Orville Thomson Room, named after the really First Historian this county had. Without him we would not have the history of the early settlers and the beginnings of the county and this city, and for this we thank him and now we honor him. Thanks Orville."*



The Bulletin

Tree and Shrub Club

We are very pleased to announce that with the landscaping of the Historical Society's Museum grounds, comes the unique opportunity for members to honor or memorialize a special person. We will have several trees and shrubs that may be dedicated. If you would like to dedicate one of the items in our landscaping to a special person or loved one, fill out the form below and send it to Tree and Shrub Club, Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240.

I would like to dedicate a (check one)

--- Large tree \$500.00

--- Small tree \$200.00

--- Large shrub/bush \$100.00

--- Small shrub/bush \$ 50.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_ In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

(living)

(deceased)

A plaque will be hung in the Historical Society Museum with names of donors and their honorees. For more information call Diana Springmier at 663-2997.

Our meeting room in the annex is in need of a large table and chairs. If you would be interested in donating a meeting table and chairs, please call David Miers or Diana Springmier. The donor's name will be engraved on a brass plate and attached to the table.

(We would be interested in a gently used set from one of the local businesses and or city/county offices.)

The Clock is ticking in our new gift shop

Reprints of **Harding's 1915 History of Decatur County** are in the gift shop. These are well-bound reprints of the originals which are selling on E-bay for as much as \$115.00 plus S&H. We ordered ten copies and are able to make them available to members for only \$90.00. Only a few left...Stop in and get your copy before they are all gone!

Just now available in the gift shop are the long-awaited 2005 Christmas Ornaments of the "Odd Fellows Home 1900". These turned out to be lovely pearl ornaments and are only \$8.00. Very soon we hope to have our 2006 Christmas Ornament "Springhill Church". There are also ornaments from past years which are "on-sale" for bargain prices.

The 1886 maps of Greensburg are a delight to all who have seen them. They are available in the gift shop for \$20.00. The prints turned out so well that we couldn't be more pleased. These will make excellent gifts for the history buff in your family. Get several!!

Our new Gift Shop is well stocked with items for every price range. We have coffee mugs, key chains, postcards, pictures, coasters, Christmas note cards, and more! We open on September 16th. Stop by and Browse!

Historical Society Gift Shop

Opens September 16th

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 to 2:00, Saturdays and Sundays 1:00 to 4:00



# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 15 No.4

Winter 2010

Greensburg, Indiana

**"If all the year  
were playing  
holidays/ To  
sport would be  
as tedious as  
work" -**



Carl G. Fisher in 1909

### Inside this issue:

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## Carl G. Fisher

By Joe Westhafer

L. Spencer Riggs wrote an extensive article titled: "Carl G. Fisher-Indiana's Best Kept Secret." The title is appropriate. Carl Fisher was one of the most famous and wealthiest men in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. His estimated wealth in 1925 was fifty million dollars. He personally knew and socialized with many of the most famous names of that time: Teddy Roosevelt, Warren G. Harding, Henry and Edsel Ford, Will Rogers, Gene Tunney, James Whitcomb Riley...the list is practically endless.

In his book titled "The Pacesetter," Jerry Fisher (a cousin) included this quote from Howard Kleinberg, special contributor for *The Miami Herald* in his preface: "Carl Fisher did not live the American dream-he made the American dream. The dirt-poor Indiana boy built his dreams into vast fortunes, and nothing was impossible to Carl G. Fisher. He had the vision to see, the daring plan, and the courage to build."

Overlooked and forgotten by the editors of "Who's Who," Carl Fisher was a practical visionary who created the Lincoln Highway, the nation's first transcontinental road, built the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, developed Miami Beach, created the Dixie Highway, and built Montauk, N.Y.- known as the Miami Beach of the North. He was called the P.T. Barnum of real estate. Will Rogers called him the "mid-wife of Florida," and Carl and Jane, his wife, were called the "King and Queen" of Miami Beach.

Carl Graham Fisher was born in Greensburg, Indiana, on January 12, 1884, to Ida and Albert Fisher in a house near the intersection of Broadway and North Streets. He did not do well in school because of poor vision and dropped out at twelve years of age. His severe astigmatism was not corrected until he was in his early thirties.

Ida divorced Albert, whose intemperate life style had taken his family to near poverty, and she moved her family to Indianapolis. Carl who was at twelve years of age the oldest of three sons, determined to do all he could to support his family. He started by selling peanuts, candy, books and magazines on the railroad. He later said he developed his salesmanship skills during this time. He worked in a bookstore where he could satisfy his desire to read. Working in a bank introduced him to finances, but it was the high-wheel bicycle that really started him on his successful career in business.

Carl and his two brothers, Earl and Robert, "Rolla," were excellent mechanics, and the bicycle shop on Pennsylvania Street was successful. Soon realizing there was no contest between the bicycle and the automobile, he converted his shop into an auto dealership - probably the first in the country. He looked for a place to expand and chose two blocks on North Capitol Boulevard where he sold a variety of automobiles. His hard work and marketing skills again resulted in success.

In 1904 Fisher and Jim Allison bought a patent for \$2,000 and de-

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veloped a compressed acetylene gas cylinder for the first successful automobile headlight and formed the "Prest-O-Lite" Company. Nine years later they sold their company for nine million dollars to Union Carbide, which wanted the cylinder for welding and medical gases.

Years of selling and racing cars had taught Fisher that the quality of American cars was poor and racing extremely dangerous. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway was the result of his putting his enthusiasm, money, and talent into developing the track for testing and racing. Early reviews were not good due to the track surface, but once it was paved its success was beyond his expectations.

Fisher's international travels had convinced him that this country's roads were few and inferior. He began to dream of a hard surface road across America. The drive for a "Coast to Coast Rock Highway" was presented to leading businessmen of the Mid-West in September 1912. In thirty days one million dollars of the expected ten million required was pledged. While the full amount was never realized, construction proceeded, and with the financial and organizational talents of Henry B. Joy, President of the Packard Motor Car Company and others, the road was completed.

It was typical of Fisher to step aside after originating the idea. As Jerry Fisher wrote in his preface: "... the American nation has never identified or recognized the man who had so radically changed it. Perhaps that was Fisher's own fault for not promoting himself. Nothing prevented him from founding the Fisher Speedway or Fisher Beach or Fisher Highway, but that was not his style even when others wanted him to do so. For Fisher, the project was always more important than his particular role in it. Worldly honor was without meaning to Carl. Working, building, and dreaming were his only values."

Miami Beach became Carl's active retirement haven. Only someone with Carl's vision could have seen a magnificent development out of a Florida swamp. The challenge was captivating to him.

Roads to Florida and within the state had been deteriorating ever since the Civil War. Carl, realizing that his success in developing Miami Beach required good roads, conceived the idea of the Dixie Highway from Canada to Miami. With states along the route vying to be included, as they did for the Lincoln Highway, work was soon underway. The 1916-1917 winter season was financially the best ever for Carl because W.W. I brought tourists who would have otherwise gone to Europe. The boom continued, and in 1925 Carl's fortune was immense.

This same year Fisher looked to the North. He bought ten thousand acres of land at Montauk, N.Y., at the East end of Long Island and planned a development to entice Miami Beach residents, and others, to summer there.

His Montauk Beach Development Co. built stables, polo grounds, beach-front board walks, theatres, a church, the Montauk Yacht Club, the Montauk Club, the Montauk Manor - a hotel second to none - entire city blocks of expensive dwellings, and a six-story office building topped with his personal penthouse. An exorbitant amount of money was spent, but sales were slow.

On September 17, 1926, a severe hurricane destroyed most of Miami Beach. Fisher put Montauk on hold in order to rescue his dream city of Miami Beach, and the New York project slipped into financial oblivion. With the Wall Street crash of 1929, what was left of his financial empire was gone.

On Friday, July 14, 1939, Fisher passed away in Miami Beach. After an impressive funeral attended by many dignitaries, his body was sent to Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis for internment in his mausoleum, ironically the only property he still owned in the city.

Spencer Riggs closes his article by saying: "Carl G. Fisher was not only the Midwest's best kept secret, but perhaps America's as well." Greensburg certainly needs to remember this native son!

Joe Westhafer, August 2010

## Editor's Note

*The accompanying reminiscence, My Home Town: Letts, Indiana, 1916-1938 was written by Neal McCammon who, along with brother, Leon, are sons of the late John McCammon. The portion of the document in the Museum's possession, and presented here, is the second part of chapter one; the first part of chapter one was published in the fall 2010 issue of The Bulletin. As you read the excerpt, you will see the author has scripted a fond recollection of Letts, and the descriptions are singularly detailed. Accompanying the narrative is an index which refers to two "diagrams" of the community as well as several photographs. There are additional chapters in the author's possession, and the Society hopes to publish these in The Bulletin as they become available. The editor believes you will enjoy reading My Home Town: Letts, Indiana, 1916-1938.*

### I Remember Part II MY HOME TOWN LETTS, INDIANA 1916-1938

The buildings (41-45) were owned by the Reimann-McCammon Co. Elevator. These buildings housed the various operations of the company. The elevator was purchased by John McCammon and J.R. Crawley about 1912. In the late 1920s Wallace Reimann of Shelbyville bought Mr. Crawley's share of the business and was basically a silent partner. In a short time the company had purchased the Burney, Sandusky, and Williamstown elevators. Mr. Reimann was a son-in-law of Mr. Nading who owned the Greensburg, Adams, St. Paul and Lewis Creek elevators.

The big part of this building was where the grain bins were used for storage. The top was where the grain was elevated to by belted buckets and directed into the separate bins. I used to like to go up into the top and look over the whole town.

The Burney elevator would hold about 10,000 bushels of grain. It was managed by Charles Ward and some of the employees were Elmer Wiley, Marshall Parker, Arthur Pavy, and Dennis Scott. The Sandusky elevator would hold about 15,000 bushels. The Williamstown elevator would hold 10,000 bushels and was used only during harvest season. Both elevators were managed by Shirley Davis, and some of his employees were Howard Osting, Bob Waybright, and George Chadwell. John McCammon managed the Letts elevator in addition to the overall operation of Letts, Burney, Sandusky, and Williamstown. Some of the employees at Letts were Fred Hessler, U.S. Parker, Milo, Harold, Neal, and Leon McCammon. The last four were all John McCammon's sons and worked their high school and college summers at all of the elevators.

The "Sash Building" was owned and operated by the elevator. During the years of the 1920s and 1930s there was a need for someone to build and repair windows. A supply of glass and wood was kept here, and one or two people were needed to make and repair windows. U.S. Parker worked here and was capable of making and fixing almost any wood product. He was a skilled carpenter and built many of the houses in Letts. He also built the Methodist Church in Letts.

The "Log Yard" (44). There was a space between the "Sash Building" and the stock yards that was used by loggers in the area. The railroad furnished flat cars for log shipping. There was no mechanical equipment then, so the loading was done by ropes and pulleys pulled by horses. There were skids from the ground to the flat car and pulleys were put on the opposite side of the car with ropes passing through the pulleys with one end of the rope around the log. The horses at the other end would pull the logs onto the car. Horses were used to drag the logs and position them in front of the skids. It took some human skill to load the logs, and it was surely dangerous. There was no record of any severe injuries in this operation, and many logs were shipped from here. Logs were brought to the yard by specially-built wagons.

The "Stock Pens" (43). The railroad provided the stock pens for the use of the stock raisers. There were six separate pens with the necessary "chutes" leading into the cars. There were two chutes: one for the bottom level of the stock car and one for the upper level, although not all rail cars had two decks. Earlier-built cars had only one deck. There were no trucks or wagons to haul stock so cows, hogs, or sheep were herded down the roads to the stock yards, sometimes a distance of three or four miles. Of course, at that time, all farms were



*Continued from page 3)*

fenced, and it was not difficult to keep the animals together. It was different when the drive got into town and the animals had to be kept off lawns and out of gardens. Some farmers who had a longer distance to go would pool their drive and have additional help. There were times the animals would be left in the pens overnight. There was never an incident when animals were stolen or let out of the pens as a prank. Those were the days people trusted each other and respected their property. The elevator had a platform stock scale and the animals were weighed for a small fee. A farmer could tell, after his stock was weighed at the shipping point, how much weight shrinkage there was between the shipping point and the purchase point.

The seed cleaning and stock scale (42) belonged to the elevator. The west part of the building was used for storage of cement and fertilizer. The east part of the building was the most important as a real service was performed here. During the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties there was a semi-primitive way of harvesting clover and timothy seed for re-seeding. The clover or timothy was threshed like wheat, but the seed was mixed with weed seed, chaff, and small pieces of stalks of the hay. In the upstairs of this building was a machine that could separate everything out of the mixture, and you would then have beautiful pure seed. The machine had three separate horizontal shelves that were on a thirty degree incline. Screens with different sized holes could be inserted into the side of each shelf. The shelves were on top of each other with about three inches between them. The hopper containing the raw seed mixture was elevated from the main floor by a belt with buckets attached. The mixture would then be poured onto the top screen. All of the screens would be vibrating lengthwise and shake the mixture so that the chaff would run off and the seeds dropped through the holes. The seeds would drop onto the next screen and next larger pieces would be run off. The remainder, which was clover or timothy would run off, and the small weed seed would fall through and good seed would run off the end of the screen. All of the ends of these screens were connected to two chutes that would drop the contents into a bag at the end of the chute onto the lower floor. The trick in the ideal separation of the seed was the proper use of the different screens with the different sized holes. This was a very busy operation in late summer and into early fall as many bushels of seed went through this operation. The machine could also clean soy beans and wheat for seeding.

The elevator office (41) was north of the seed cleaning building. To the east was a building used for the storage of animal feed. This building would have several tons of feed stored for sale. The two brands of feed handled were Tuxedo and Wayne which in the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties were very familiar names. After a period of time the feed was bagged in one- hundred pound sacks that were made of print material especially designed for the purpose of laundering and then made into clothing, sheets, dish cloths, etc. Each ton of feed might have a half dozen different designs and colors in the material. This proved to be a good selling point.

Situated between the elevator office and the seed storage building was a very important scale used to weigh all vehicles passing over carrying grain or coal. During this time almost everyone burned coal for heat so the elevator kept over one hundred tons of coal in the bins all of the time. Much of the coal was sold from the rail car to the buyer's home. Most of the people would buy a winter's supply during the summer as the coal was fifty cents a ton cheaper then. Each train car held at least forty tons, and there was no place hotter than a coal car when the temperature was ninety to a hundred degrees.

The heart of the elevator business was the building that housed the machinery and bins needed to handle and store grain. There was a large engine whose flywheels were nearly the height of a man. This engine would turn the main shaft connecting a series of wheels carrying operating belts used to run the drag belt in the grain pit, the corn sheller, the grain grinder, the elevator belt that carried the grain to the top of the building (which was three stories high), and the lifts that were used on the front wheels of the wagons or trucks to elevate the vehicle in order to dump grain into the hopper in the floor and move it horizontally to the buckets already attached to a belt. These buckets would then transport the grain to the very top of the building. By changing the spouts at the top, the grain could be channeled into any one of the four bins. These bins could hold 15,000 bushels of grain. When the grain was sold, it was moved to the second floor into a bin that could weigh up to one hundred bushels. When the grain was released, it would fall through a metal spout into the railroad car by the side of the building. When the wheat harvest was in full blast the horse-drawn grain wagons could be lined up for one to two blocks. The wagons would be pulled into the building with the rear of the wagon directly over the pit in the floor, the horses were unhitched and moved away from the wagon, and metal hooks were attached to the front wheels of the wagon. Then a lever was raised to tighten the belt, and the front end raised to dump the grain.

*(Continued on page 5)*



Continued from page 4)

Wagons were used prior to the late nineteen twenties until trucks became available which could move larger amounts of grain faster. Trucks were handled much the same way as wagons. Some of the earlier grain and cattle trucks were owned and operated by Harvey Owens, Howard Williams, Roy Freidersdorf, Bill Krummel and Lowell Hubbard. The trucks at that time had beds that could be converted for hauling stock or grain. Now most

livestock was being moved by truck to Indianapolis or Cincinnati markets, so the local stockyard business decreased. Ear corn was handled in the same way as wheat but taken into the corn sheller in the basement. The sheller was made of two round metal plates enclosed in a frame. The plates had metal prongs built into them and the space in between could be adjusted so the distance would be a little wider than the cobs to allow the kernels to be rubbed off, but not crushed. The corn cobs and cob dust would all be elevated (same as wheat) to the top of the elevator where there was a similar machine to the one in the seed cleaning building. All the mixture would run onto the machine, and the cobs would run off the top screen. The corn would fall through the holes in the second screen. This operation would make huge piles of cobs during the season.

The next important part of the mill operation was grinding. There were two round stone wheels encased in a metal container. Both of the wheels were about thirty inches in diameter and had six to eight angular grooves in them. One of the wheels was stationary and the other would turn. The turning wheel could be adjusted so the space between would allow the grain to be crushed to the desired coarseness. The grooves would allow the crushed grain to be expelled. Corn could be cracked or could be crushed for corn meal. All of these operations could be changed by removing belts from the pulleys on the main shaft and putting belts onto the required operation.

Some grain, if it contained too much moisture, would have a tendency to heat and could spoil or cause internal combustion and start a fire. There were no grain dryers in those days. In order to cool the grain, a spout was attached to the bin and the grain ran into the pit in the floor. The grain was then drawn by the bucket belt to the top of the elevator and directed into a new bin. All of this movement and the stirring was a more or less primitive method, but it was the only way and it worked.

In order to go from the first floor to the top floor of the elevator, there was a platform that was four foot square with a seven foot crossbar. A one inch diameter rope attached to the platform reached the top of the building and went over a two foot grooved pulley on a shaft. At the other end of the rope was a weight that was equivalent to the weight of the platform plus a person of average weight. This rope and weight were encased in a wood tube that expanded from the top to the bottom of the building. When the platform was on the lower floor the weight was at the top of the wooden shaft. Releasing the brake on the platform would lower the weight and pull it and the occupant upward. There was an attached rope from top to bottom that would allow the rider to assist the weight when the balance was not exact. If you were too light in weight there was a group of weights to place on the platform to equalize the counter weight and, perfectly balanced, it was a free ride. The elevator was the tallest building in town, by far, so when you went to the top and looked out the south window on a fall day after the trees had shed their leaves you could see most of the town.

The storage building of the elevator was used for storing lumber that was shipped in by box cars. Lumber was in big demand locally during these years. In the eighteen nineties there had been a flourishing sawmill north of this building where the workers stored their lumber, but it went out of business about 1906. *(To be continued.)*



## Patriotic Cooperation and Recognition

On the evening of November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Greensburg-Decatur County Chamber of Commerce chose a patriotic theme for its annual meeting. Recalling the military display at the Historical Society over the last several months, Chamber representatives contacted the Museum staff for the loan of appropriate items. Museum volunteers arranged a most impressive display of uniforms, flags, veterans' service record books, and other paraphernalia. The response of those in attendance was exceptionally positive, and they expressed a greater awareness of what the Museum offers. It is hoped this recognition will lead to other opportunities for Decatur County organizations to work together for a result that is greater than its parts.



## Document Cataloging

Museum volunteers are currently involved in cataloging the numerous original documents in the Museum's possession. Each document is described by the individuals involved, the circumstances which engendered the document, and the date(s) noted. When the project is completed, the data will be entered into our computer so researchers will be able to find primary sources - the references which are highly desirable.

## Membership Form

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues.

Check your address label to see if you have paid. Memberships make great gifts. We are looking for new members. Consider giving a membership as a Christmas gift this year. We also have Courthouse puzzles, many past years' Christmas bulbs, maps and throws for gift giving. Call or stop by any Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday or Sunday.

### **."The Two-Pound Cannon Ball"**

The following article appeared in the *Greensburg Daily News* on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1932. The purpose of the "cannon ball" for practice is perhaps plausible, but one would like to see the cannon that propelled the shot. Perhaps hearing of the existence of such an instrument of destruction deterred John Hunt Morgan from attacking Greensburg.

**A two-pound cannon ball was found on the banks of Gas Creek near the stone quarry, just south of the city limits Tuesday and was brought to the News office today by Greenberry Roszell, 85, who is old enough to remember when a cannon belonged to the city and was often used back in the 60's in firing at a large sycamore tree which was used as a target. This ball is believed to have been one that was used In practicing on the tree which stood on the bank of the Creek. It may be seen in the News window.**

### **The Fifth Season of "Fifth Sunday Musicals"**

The Historical Society of Decatur is joining with the Greensburg Decatur County Public Library in presenting the fifth season of the Fifth Sunday Musicals at the Greensburg First Presbyterian Church.

The programs will be held on the fifth Sunday of various months in 2011. Classical music programs will be presented for the public's enjoyment.

Starting off the series will the Reen Family on January 30, 2011. This is a talented family of musicians and vocalists. On July 31, 2011 the featured talent will be Emily Ann Thompson with a Celtic fiddle program. The series finale will be on October 30, 2011 with the Junior High Band with the Elite Editions Show Choir.

If you would like to be a sponsor of these events please fill out the form below.

Gold Sponsor \$450.00 ( ) Silver Sponsor \$350.00 ( ) Bronze Sponsor \$250.00 ( )

Sponsor \$150.00 ( ) Co-Sponsor \$75.00 ( ) Patron \$50.00 ( )

Underwriter \$5.00 ( ) \$10.00 ( ) \$15.00 ( ) \$20.00 ( ) \$25.00 ( )

Make check payable to : Decatur County Historical Society

Mail to attention: "Fifth Sunday", P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_



## Museum Musings

by D. E. Springmier

This fall has been one of recognizing museum volunteers, sharing the museum with young ghosts and goblins and with other groups of all ages and walks of life.

September concluded with the Annual Volunteers' Luncheon, which was prepared by Polly Matlock and Susan Wilson, Society members, and volunteers. The luncheon was again held at the nearby Presbyterian Church. Centering the tables were hat-clad pumpkins, carrying out this years' theme, "Hats off to our Volunteers."

Those who share their time on a regular basis are the reason the museum is and continues to be open on a regular schedule four days a week and by appointment for private tours.

October, normally a quiet month before the anticipated preparation for the Holidays, was one of unusual yet delightfully spirited activities as life-size skeletons headed the dining room table whose chairs were enveloped by cobwebs, streaming from the chandelier. Amadeus Wolfgang Mozart s' skeleton was poised to play the Four Square Grand while across the hall Riley poems were read to a circle of children by a friendly witch, Sally Robbins.

On the second floor, Red Riding Hood skirted the four poster as the Wolf with his menacing teeth peeked out from under the covers. Fortunes were told by a gentle witch in the textile room as a cakewalk was taking place in the gallery all to booming eerie organ music.

The lawn sported Jack the Ripper, John Dillinger and other characters' tombstones, guiding the way for the children attending the Society's first Annual Children's Halloween Party Saturday afternoon, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The well-received party, planned by the Creepy Crawler Committee, members of the HSDC Board, chaired by Elizabeth Bailey, welcomed 130 children with their parents and grandparents. Many having their first museum experience, took part in the spirited afternoon.

That same evening an adult party and silent auction was held at the neighboring Saler building and in the museum's gallery. The committee appreciated the many donations that had resulted in a successful Halloween first for the Society and museum.

North Decatur Fifth Grade Students and a Cub Scout Troop were the last groups to visit the held- over Military Exhibit before the Halloween décor greeted Lone Tree DAR, honoring Good Citizen winners from the three local high schools at their October meeting.

For the past few weeks, the museum has shown the Victorian rooms as they would have been in that era. Now they are awaiting a Holiday dressing as the Christmas Committee carries out the 2010 theme, "Sweet Memories of Christmas," for the upcoming annual Christmas Open House, December 12, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Santa's letters may be mailed on the porch in the bright red L.S. Ayres mailbox while Santa and his elf will be greeting children in the north parlor. Ladies of the Society will have the dining room table laden with seasonal pastries while visitors will be entertained by Willadene Wood, pianist, Carolyn Cleland, harpist, and a return visit by young musicians from Melody Mart.

While 395 guests crossed the museum's threshold in October, the month of November will be busy with preparations for December's Christmas events.

See you during the holidays.

*Diana*

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY MUSEUM Coming Attractions

**December 3rd to 31st, 2010**

### *Sweet Memories of Christmas*

Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup>

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Santa, Mrs. Claus, and Santa's

Elf will greet children of all ages

Children bring your letters to Santa

For the L.S. Ayers Toyland Mailbox

Train Display will delight all ages.

Enjoy holiday music and refreshments

Bring your cameras and have your picture taken in our vintage sleigh.

Free and open to the public



### **Upcoming Events for Next Year**

**Museum and office closed Jan 1st to Jan 31st.**

**January 30, 2011 Fifth Sunday- First Presbyterian Church - 1:00 p.m. - The Reen Family**

This is a talented family of musicians and vocalists. This event is free and open to the public.

**February 3, 2011 Annual Business Meeting**

**April, 2011 - All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League Exhibit**

The Center of History in South Bend is the national archives for the All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League. We will have a wonderful display of original artifacts such as uniforms, gloves, hats, scorecards, photos, etc. More information to come.

**April 16, 2011 Annual Dinner and Program**

**May 17 - 18, 2011 - Last Supper Quilt Exhibit - First Christian Church Family Life Center**

This religious art and craft exhibit will feature "The Supper" quilt inspired by DaVinci's *The Last Supper* and pieced together by Don Locke, DDS. It has been exhibited in more than 30 states and 5 countries.



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**Society's Agent**

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Diana Springmier

**Historical Society of Decatur County Museum**

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April  
thru December  
Museum phone/fax: 663-2764  
Email: dechissoc@etczone.net  
After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

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